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INDIA'S LEADING LIFE OFFICE





# A NATION AT BAY

Foreword By  
K. M. MUNSHI

*A panoramic survey of the Indian political landscape chronologically arranged beginning from the August offer to the Secretary of State's latest peroration. Every phase of the political controversy is embodied incorporating the country wide reaction. Resolutions, speeches, statements and selected articles from prominent statesmen are reproduced giving a vivid picture of the background ending in the political deadlock*

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## FOREWORD

The publisher has rendered timely service, by publishing the recent speeches and statements of Indian and British statesmen on the Indian situation.

Mr. Amery has handed over India's future to Mr. Jinnah; for, perfecting the British policy of divide and rule, the latter has been accorded a right to veto all political progress of India.

The Indian National Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha, the large majority of Muslims who owe no allegiance to the Muslim League, the Sikhs, the Indian Christians, the Liberals, the large number of Nationalists who have so far not associated with any political organisation—even the Indian States—are negligible in the eyes of this Secretary of State. India, which centuries of sacrifice have built up, he hopes to weaken or destroy as suits the self-interest of Britain.

Mr. Jinnah with his small band of Leaguers claims to represent ten crores of Muslims—which in fact he does *not*. The terms, on which he was prepared to co-operate with the Viceroy, were that he and his Muslim Leaguers should be allowed to occupy a predominant position in the Government of India in order that they may coerce the country into doing his bidding. His Pakistan utterances indicate an ambition to destroy the Nation and reduce the millions who do not, or cannot, be members of the Muslim League to the position of helots in India. As a result, communal bitterness is stalking the land, taking its toll of human lives.

Thus Mr. Jinnah aspires to conquer what Aurangzebe with his army failed to retain.

In this attempt, British statesmen find a convenient excuse for perpetuating the bureaucratic control of the country. But much can be forgiven to them at this moment when they



are staying long of their own existence. They cannot calculate as to the prospects at the moment about the means they employ to retain their hold over this country, which to them is a milk cow. They therefore cleverly manipulate all our activities to conform to the national aspirations.

In the mean time, the Axis menace is creeping nearer the Indian line, and the territorial integrity of India may any day be endangered. By the very nature of the British policy, the Nation is denied participation in the war, while Britain is endeavouring to defeat the Axis enemy in a conventional war. In this the Nation will be a failure.

To all these dangers the Nation can but give one answer, the only answer which a nation can give — which the French Nation gave to combated Europe in 1791 — which Britain gave to the Axis Power. In this struggle, Hindus and Muslims, Sikhs and Christians will follow the same path. They will resist and resist with all their might, all attempts at deception. In the course of such resistance the Nation will welcome suffering and sacrifice. It will to the very end neither waver nor tire. And this the Nation shall do.

K. H. HANDE

Varanasi

May 10, 1941

## PREFACE

SINCE their advent into this country never have the Britishers—or for that matter neither has the world—witnessed so unique and united an Indian opposition to their Governmental policy towards India's constitutional development, as the one that exists today. Something like this, though to a smaller degree by far, was witnessed during the visit of the Simon Commission. But then the British had a few reactionary Indian allies to expose their cause. These Indian nationals reposed so great a faith in British good will that the extremists dubbed them as *Jō-hukums* and 'pillars of the British Imperialism in this country'. Even these have revolted today and refuse to be used as tools of the Imperialists. Who ever heard of an Adviser to the Secretary of State giving to that high functionary a public advice and chastisement? Yet, that is what Dr E. Raghavendra Rao (Adviser to the Secretary of State for India) did on May 2, during a debate initiated by the East India Association in London.

The whole country stands today united as one man, in this opposition to British Imperialism. India has awakened, the nation has recovered her soul.

How has this come to pass? What has brought about this unique situation? The War, is the reply. In their glum possessive Imperialistic mood the British declared India in, when Britain declared war against Germany. They did not stop to think and reckon the possible repercussion of such a complacent decision on their part. It is possible that the British Government thought that such a vehemently anti-Nazi country like India, would whole-heartedly join in the war against Nazism. They managed to overlook the fact that Indians though dead set against Nazism were not enamoured with British Imperialism either.

"When on September 8 1914 King George V called on the people of India to fight to overthrow an unparalleled assault upon the continuity of civilization and the Peace of mankind India's response was spontaneous and overwhelming." India rushed her millions in men, money and material to Britain's aid. In the flush of victory won largely through India's help Britain broke her troth—hedged and preferred India a counterfeit half hearted and make believe swaraj India learnt her lesson bitterly but well, she would forgive but not forget.

The declaration of the Viceroy making India belligerent brought up country wide protests. "When on September 11 1939 King George VI asked India to fight for a principle which is vital to the future of mankind, the response was reluctant and sullen." But the leaders of the important parties were not prepared at that stage to precipitate any political turmoil by advising non participation in the war effort.

Indians Declare your war aims and to indicate your earnestness grant us, as a small token, a provisional National Government at the Centre for the duration of the war We do not ask complete freedom now, at this stage when you are fighting for your very existence. Show us that you are sincere by conceding our minor demands. You may keep all the safeguards in your favour and we will not much mind it at the present. This was the touchstone of British sincerity. The cat was out of the bag, when the British Government declared its inability to state what its war aims were The British Premier declared his war aims, for the present to be "one of self preservation" Different Cabinet Ministers made various statements—all vaguely worded One of them just said that Britain's war aims were 'to win the war'

This decided India's attitude towards British Imperialism, though practically every one in the country was, in the heart of hearts, praying for the defeat of Hitler and Mussolini "We are slaves now", so thought Indians, "under foreign domination Why should we help to perpetuate that slavery, for that is the only meaning of British refusal to concede even the minor demands of Indian nationalists" And, when they are not prepared to grant even these minor demands now, what guarantee is there that they will do anything for India when they win the war?

Several things happened before the country was disillusioned about British intentions The Viceroy Linlithgow, soon after declaring India at war with Germany, sent for two score and twelve men from all over the country They belonged to various groups, descriptions and denominations Any one who got up and said that he was a leader and represented some sub-caste or sub-section of the population was conferred the honour of spending a few minutes with the Viceroy These series of interviews were intended obviously to impress the outside world, especially the United States of America

Before proceeding further, as to what the outcome of the series of interviews was, it is necessary to know the individual, who represents His Majesty's Government and in the name of England rules this country with the help of the steel-frame comprising a service which in spite of its designation is 'neither Indian nor Civil'. Not

being a leader I have no personal knowledge of the gentleman, except through the photos of him I see. I have thus seen him often in connection with cattle shows and presentation of stud bulls. Hence I take the best description of this august personality from what Gandhiji has said. However sweet-tongued one may be Gandhiji cannot be deceived. I reproduce below for the benefit of the readers, Gandhiji's estimate of this peer of the English realm, who has been rated as one of 1940's greatest failures. Says Gandhiji

"He is straight in his talk, always deliberate and economical in his language. He is never equivocal, never leaves you in doubt as to his meaning. He conveys the most unpalatable decisions with a calmness and courtesy which, for the moment make you think that you have heard no harsh or hard decision. He listens to your argument with a patience and attention I have never known any other Viceroy or high functionary to show in an equal measure. He is never ruffled and never discourteous. With all this however he is not to be easily moved from his position. He meets you with his decision on the matter under discussion already made. He takes care not to let you think that it is so, but there is no doubt about it that his decision is unchangeable. He is not receptive. He has amazing confidence in the correctness of his judgment. He does not believe in a gentleman's or any other agreement. I have always felt that after the Cambridge Case British satraps decided that there should be no more such parties. Whatever they wanted to do they should do independently. It shows either a high sense of justice or a unflinching self-assurance. I think it is the latter. He and I have become friends more to be pained by the differences between us as great as they can be. He is such an opponent of the Viceroy it pains me to have to relate what I must of my impression of the fact which I have related in a divergence which in my opinion was wholly a contradiction. An example of my personal view I have given no less than 1000. I am not then to fail."

He is a statesman and the Secretary of State for India has to be thankful for the present moment. He is not in the same way. At least being the Government of the country and a great power to be

standing at attention, it was not difficult to command all the paraphernalia required for the prosecution of war. Policy of drift scrupulously maintained has become the order of the day. Whilst subjecting the country to this Imperialistic strangle-hold, the Viceroy and the Secretary of State indulged in, what has now turned out to be their favourite hobby, issuing lengthy statements on the political deadlock. These statements contained nothing which would induce Indians to help in solving the political tangle but they served the purpose of beguiling the world into a belief that the British Government was all anxiety to part with power in favour of Indians but that Indians themselves have been making it impossible.

Having seen the genesis of "divide and rule" British policy in India it will be evident to even an ordinary political thinker that the various British statements, declarations and speeches are running true to their type.

The erstwhile Secretary of State for India set the ball rolling. He made several statements on the Indian situation when the War began and encouraged the communalists to stiffen their impossible attitudes. The Viceroy played his part well by contributing fifty-two types of arguments. The advent of Mr L. S. Amery showed a flicker of hope to Indian aspirations but its synchronisation with the ascendancy of Mr Winston Churchill to power robbed it of any high hopes for the "hewers of wood and drawers of water." The premium put on the previous utterances of Gorakhpur born Leopold Amery and his statement on assumption to the London correspondent of the *Hindustan Times*: "You can tell India that every ounce of my energy will be directed in consultation with the Viceroy towards seeking an agreement with leaders of Indian opinion," have proved to be mere prattlings.

We will see in these pages how the Linlithgow—Amery combination started with systematic undermining of the spread of national feeling assiduously achieved by the Congress. The following pages will reveal how the Muslim hare was given a flying start under the transigence truculence of a perennial President of the League. We will read in the following pages how the antipathy and anger of the Mahasabha was inflamed and the Hindu hound let loose in chase as a counterpoise

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He his advisers and the Secretary of State for India have to be thanked for the present impossible situation in the country. After all being the Government of the country and a quixotic princely order

standing at attention, it was not difficult to command all the paraphernalia required for the prosecution of war. Policy of drift scrupulously maintained has become the order of the day. Whilst subjecting the country to this Imperialistic strangle-hold, the Viceroy and the Secretary of State indulged in, what has now turned out to be their favourite hobby, issuing lengthy statements on the political deadlock. These statements contained nothing which would induce Indians to help in solving the political tangle but they served the purpose of beguiling the world into a belief that the British Government was all anxiety to part with power in favour of Indians but that Indians themselves have been making it impossible.

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In the following pages we will find how honest intellectual giants meeting in a Conference in Bombay have been dubbed as political pigmies and relegated to the woods.

In short, the following pages will present the reader with a panoramic chronological view of the present political stalemate obtaining in the country as a result pure and simple—of Britain missing opportunities, banking on her proverbial “muddling through to success” luck.

Meanwhile, things are moving fast in the outside world. The war is getting nearer India. The time is fast approaching when England and India will have to fight shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy who is seeking enslavement of the world. The great “Arsenal of Democracy” is slowly but surely moving towards full aid to England. And, this is the England which has again and again refused the demand of India for independence. The Government of King George VI has refused to India the independence that King George III refused to the 13 original States of the American Colonies. George Washington headed a Revolution which freed America from the grip of England—America which today as the “Arsenal of Democracy” is itching to pick up the gauntlet to help England as an equal but senior ally.

Rough parallels and contrasts between the American movement and the present one in India are worth noting. The American rebels were in actual minority. Wealthy colonists wished to stay with the British for the sake of security as many of our Princelings and their ilk, do today.

Britain's argument that we are unfit to govern was used against the Americans then. Our charges against the British are almost word by word what America's were. Americans were split religiously and politically as in India.

George Washington took advantage of England's European trouble to win America's liberty. This is exactly what Gandhiji—India's undisputed political leader in this struggle—refuses to do. American movement was boisterous and violent. Gandhian technique is peaceful and non-violent. France came to America's help then but no one

will come to India's India is destined to fight a lone hand Can it be that the freedom-loving people of America do not understand and sympathize with this country's struggle by recalling their own ?

The scale, character, methods and technique of the movement led by the "naked fakir" are unique and unprecedented in history As great a pacifist as was Christ himself, Mahatma Gandhi not only preaches but practises all the Christian doctrines of loving enemies and winning them And he has started with mighty Britain and will win despite British machine guns, cannon, bayonets and bombers without bloodshed May the dawn of that day be not too far off—indications are that it is just below the horizon



## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>vii</i>
I Secretary of State's Callous Outburst	1
II Amery Pats His Own Back	13
III Sir George Schuster Shows the Way	18
IV. The Savant Speaks Out	25
V Even Moderates Disillusioned	28
VI Sapru Slashes Out	36
VII Indignation Abounding	41
VIII Echoes from the Press	60

## APPENDICES

I The August Offer	67
II Poona Ratification and Congress Resolution on Viceroy's Offer	73
III Muslim League Resolution	79
IV Hindu Mahasabha Resolution	83
V Bombay Conference Resolution	87
VI Truculent Jinnah & Tranquil Sapru	90
VII Through the Nation's Spectroscope	108



## Secretary of State's Callous Outburst in the House of Commons

MR L S AMERY, Secretary of State for India, moved a resolution in the House of Commons on 22nd April 1941 to extend for another year the Proclamation under which the Governors of the Indian Provinces can assume the powers of Provincial Legislatures.

The purpose of the resolutions which I am submitting to the House,' he said, 'is to extend for another twelve months Proclamations issued under provisions of Section 93 of the Government of India Act. Under terms of that Section, the Governor of a Province, if he is satisfied that a situation has arisen wherein Parliamentary Government cannot be carried on in accordance with the Act, can, by Proclamation, assume all or any of the powers vested in provincial bodies and authorities'.

'This situation arose in October 1939 in consequence of the action of the Congress Party's so-called High Command in ordering Congress Ministers to resign. Proclamations under Section 93 were accordingly issued in seven provinces and their continuance in force for a further twelve months was duly approved by the House on April 18 last year. There has been no change in the situation since then and I regret we have no alternative to further extension of these emergency provisions

In the four Provinces of Bengal, Assam, Sind and Punjab with population something like 100 million people—one-third of the whole population of British India—Provincial Self-Government has continued to work uninterruptedly under composite Governments including Muslim and Hindu Ministers. On all questions which most nearly affect ordinary life of the citizen—all questions, in fact, which occupy most of the attention of this House in times of peace—these hundred million of Indians have now for four years, been enjoying advantages of democratic Self-Government. Ministers and Legislators have continued to gain experience and are making their contribution not only to the welfare of their constituents within wide sphere of their direct authority but also to India's general war effort.

We ought not to under-estimate the significance of this remarkable advance in Self-Government over so large a field. Nor can we afford to ignore the importance of the voice, which these provinces, through their Governments, are bound to exercise in any deliberations affecting the future constitution of India.

From this point of view it is a matter of deep regret that the two hundred million inhabitants of other seven provinces were, by an ukase of the Congress High Command, forbidden to continue to build up the practice and tradition of Self-Government. Their Governments too had made satisfactory beginning and if they made mistakes—as even we have been known to do—the remedy lay with their electors.

So far indeed, as provincial electorates are concerned, it must be admitted that they have nowhere showed any signs of distress at suspension of Parliamentary Government—in this respect no doubt, differing greatly from what would be the attitude of our own electors if deprived of the services of this front bench. The change to direct personal Government by Governors and permanent officials met with general acquiescence and indeed goodwill. Whatever political unrest there may be in India today has certainly not arisen in any way from suspension of provincial Self-Government.

There has been no discontinuity or abrupt reversal in either administrative or legislative policy. In few instances indeed, notably in connection with Prohibition, legislation has had to be modified in consequence of legal decisions. But, generally speaking the work of beneficent social progress continues in full swing and with broad public

approval. The House, certainly, need not fear that the continuance of direct Government in these provinces for another twelve months will, of itself, add to the difficulties of the political situation.

What, indeed, was a really serious inaction of the Congress-controlled Ministries, was not so much direct as the immediate result of their action in the provinces themselves where it was held in complete disregard, displayed by the most powerful political organization in India, for the responsibilities of Self-Government and an indirect effect, of this evidence of Congress methods, upon the general political situation.

When we speak of responsible Parliamentary Government we are apt to emphasise one aspect of that responsibility—namely, responsibility of Government towards party majority in Legislature. But Responsible Parliamentary Government, if it is to work successfully, implies threefold responsibility. There is first and foremost the responsibility to the Crown, in other words, to the general welfare, the duty of maintaining substantial continuity and efficiency of Government—of seeing, in an old phrase, that ‘Kings Government is carried on.’ There is, secondly the responsibility to Parliament as an institution, founded, Mr Speaker, upon your authority and upon the rights of minorities which, subject to established procedure of Parliament, are in your keeping.

It is only in the third place and subject to these dominating responsibilities that the Government is responsible to its supporter in Parliament for the promotion of particular policies in which they are interested.

In the present case the Ministers resigned not as a result of any difference with the Governors, not over any issue of provincial policy nor at the instance of their own supporters. They resigned in order to bring about a complete breakdown of the administration and parliamentary life in their own provinces at the orders of an outside executive which wished in this imperious and irresponsible fashion to express its disapproval of the absence of a statement by the British Government of their war aims framed to its liking.

I can only say that whatever may have been the motives which inspired the conduct both of the Congress High Command and the



Provincial Ministries, there is no greater danger to the Democratic Government in India as elsewhere than Party Totalitarianism

What has been even more immediately serious in its effect has been the demonstration of Congress methods upon other important elements in India, non-Congress Provinces, Muslim community generally and the Princes. It has been confirmed to a point of a fixed determination their already growing reluctance to take part in or come under any Central Government in India which is likely to be subject to control of a majority in legislature, which in its turn would simply obey orders of the Congress Central Executive.

The Congress repudiated federal provisions of the Act of 1935 largely because they had weighted representation to some extent in the Legislatures in favour of minority element, in what the Congress regarded as an undemocratic sense. The Congress is, I fear blind to the risk that no alternative Constitution is now likely to emerge which could secure for it as great a measure of influence and control over India as a whole as it would have exercised under the present Act.

The most significant symptom of the changed situation is the growing strength of the demand voiced by Mr Jinnah leader of the Muslim League, for complete severance from rest of India of north western and north-eastern zones, wherein the Muslims constitute a majority and their establishment as completely independent states controlling their own Foreign Policy Defence, Customs and Finances.

I am not concerned here to discuss the immense practical difficulties in the way of this so-called Pakistan project, stated in thus its extreme form nor need I go back to the dismal record of India's history in the eighteenth century or to the disastrous experience of the Balkan countries before our eyes today in order to point out the terrible dangers inherent in any break-up of essential unity of India at any rate in its relation to the outside world. After all there is no British achievement in India of which we have better reason to be proud than the unity internal peace and reign of law which we have given her.

It is enough for my purpose if I can impress upon the House on the one hand the underlying determination of the Muslim India not to accept any Constitution which does not give reasonably free play

to individual life of predominantly Muslim units and on the other the growing danger of preaching on both sides, Hindu and Muslim, of extreme and incompatible policies.

It was recognition of this danger as well as the hope that the gravity of the war situation might bring the parties together in a spirit of co-operation and responsibility, that led His Majesty's Government to make a new statement of policy which was made public by Lord Linlithgow in August last.

What was the essence of that statement? It was that the framework of India's future Constitution should be devised by Indians for themselves and not by this House. That was a far-reaching and indeed, revolutionary announcement, the full importance of which, has not, I think, even yet been fully appreciated either in this country or in India.

It was, in fact, recognition in advance of India's status as a Dominion.

That recognition was coupled with two conditions. One was that provision would have to be made for the due fulfilment of those obligations which Great Britain's long connection with India had imposed on her.

Some of these, as for instance the obligations towards the existing members of the Services, are by their very nature terminable. But others like those arising from India's present dependence upon this country for defence will naturally be subject to modification with the growth of India's own capacity to defend herself unaided. Others such as treaty obligations of the Crown towards the Princes are of more enduring character. In any case none of them stand in the way of shaping the structure of India's future constitution, which is to be essentially an Indian constitution framed in accordance with the Indian conceptions of the Indian conditions and the Indian needs.

Even more important in this connection is the stipulation that the constitution itself and also the body which is to frame it must be the outcome of an agreement between principal elements in India's national life.

That is an essential prerequisite to the success of the future constitution. For if Indians cannot agree upon the kind of constitution they are prepared to work, how are they likely to agree upon the actual working of it?

Our constitution here works because there is behind it an unwritten agreement based upon centuries of traditions as to the limits within which a majority can exercise its position of advantage. In all federal constitutions previous free agreement upon the nature of constitution and of limits within which the majority rule can be exercised has been the condition upon which various elements of federation have been prepared to come together.

Anxious as we are to see the responsibility of the Indian Government resting upon Indian shoulders we can only transfer that responsibility to some body which can assume it without immediately breaking down or breaking up.

Subject to that requisite of an agreement which is inherent in the circumstances of Indian situation and not arbitrarily imposed by our selves, the whole constitutional field is open for modification or fundamental reconstruction of the existing Act.

The Indian statesmen need not be bound by a system of Government at the Centre contemplated in that Act or by relations between the Centre and Provinces and States. If they agree regarding the distribution of powers or electoral system there is a field open for them for settlement. If they come to the conclusion that our type of democracy with an executive dependent upon a Parliamentary majority stands in the way of an agreement and that India's needs would be better met by an executive deriving its authority more directly from the federated units like the American Executive, independent of legislature, that again is their responsibility.

We, who in this House wrestled for months with intricacies of existing Act which I still look upon as very remarkable piece of constructive legislation—should be loath to underrate the difficulty of the task which lies before the Indian statesmanship.

It is a task calling for sheer hard thinking in the working out of practical ways and means of solving an immensely complicated

problem. It is a task which calls above all for that mediating and moderating spirit without which great things cannot be achieved in human affairs. That is the task whereto we have invited Indian statesmanship.

While the decisive and final resolution of so fundamental an issue cannot take place in the midst of the life and death struggle wherein we are engaged, there is nothing whatever to prevent the Indian thinkers and Indian businessmen from engaging now in those preliminary discussions and studies which are so essential to the success and which no more in India than elsewhere can be hastily disposed of. We are only too anxious to promote such study and discussion in every way possible.

All the same the main responsibility both for the initiation and completion of this high inquiry rests with the Indians themselves. We can only pledge ourselves to hasten to the utmost degree decisions on all relevant issues that lie within our part. It is upon the Indian statesmen and not upon us that the time table of future constitutional progress depends. So much for the major constitutional problem.

There was a further question whether in the interval there was any practical step that the Government could take which, without prejudicing the major issue, could contribute towards its solution.

There could, of course be no question of changing over the whole basis of administrative and legislative power or placing India's war effort in hands of an entirely new executive. Nor could that have been done without at once raising those very issues of the division of power between the conflicting elements in India which are still unresolved. What we could do was to invite the Indian leaders representing main political factors to join the Viceroy's Executive Council. Invitation to them was not only individually to take charge of important departments of State, but also to partake fully in collective responsibility of Council.

Their inclusion would have brought the Indian membership of the Council, official and unofficial, to a substantial majority of the whole. But it would not have so altered the essential character of the Council as to deprive the Governor-General of his existing trusted

advisers or as to commit the Indian leaders who joined it to any course which would have deprived them of a free hand in dealing with the major problems of the constitutional future. We believed and still believe that the creation of such a coalition executive would have afforded an opportunity for the Indian leaders, in an atmosphere of common effort for India's security to forget for a while their differences and begin to envisage their problems in the light of wider Indian patriotism.

So far, our hopes have been disappointed. Congress rejected out of hand both our major and interim proposals. Its attitude is "All or Nothing" and by all it means immediate independence of an India governed by a constitution which would ensure Congress control.

It refused even to discuss the matter and proceeded to launch a curious campaign of Mahatma Gandhi's devising. In pursuance of that campaign, Congress leaders including ex Premiers and ex Ministers as well as the selected members of the rank and file have made speeches intended and calculated to interfere with the war effort. They have deliberately challenged fine or imprisonment with the same unquestioning obedience to party whip as when they resigned the office in the provinces and in many cases I believe with some misgiving and reluctance. The situation thus created is naturally embarrassing as it was meant to be. But clearly the Government cannot punish the ordinary offenders and overlook the same offences when committed by men whose position and course of action deliberately enhances their significance and their political effect.

This campaign of Civil Disobedience by instalments has now been in progress for nearly six months. The first phase in which the illegal action was confined to the leading members of the Congress ended in January. The second phase which included representatives of provincial and local committees ended early this month and we are now in rank and file phase.

Magistrates while vindicating the law have treated the problem with common sense ignoring nonentities and in many cases imposing fine without option of imprisonment. This latter procedure has been so discouraging to those whose chief inducement was prospective electioneering value of prison sentence that Mahatma Gandhi has had to

announce that payment of a fine will count as an equally meritorious sacrifice in Congress hagiology.

On the whole, the movement has proceeded languidly and without evoking much popular interest except in the United Provinces which have in recent months contributed more than half the offences. By the middle of March some 7,000 offenders had been convicted and some 5,000 are still in prison. The whole business is as regrettable as it is irrational but the Government had and has no alternative to enforcing law.

Apart from the Congress the Government's major policy for the constitutional future may be said to have relieved anxieties of the various elements which compose India's national structure.

As regards more immediate policy of extension of the Viceroy's Council, acceptance in principle unfortunately did not lead to any actual agreement in detail. The Muslim League in particular asked for measure of representation as against Hindu elements and made stipulations as to the future which the Viceroy could not see his way to accepting. It was of course always open to the Viceroy to add to his Council individual Indians of high character and ability. But such a course would not have achieved the desired object which was to associate the representative Hindu and Muslim political leaders with the conduct of war and so bring them closer together for the future. Very reluctantly therefore Lord Linlithgow decided in November to discontinue for the time being his unwearied efforts carried on ever since the war began to bring the parties together leaving the door open to further reconsideration by those directly concerned.

No one can look upon the present deadlock with satisfaction. Least of all patriotic Indians who, looking beyond narrower aims of sectional leaders, are deeply concerned with India's progress towards equal partnership in our "Family of Free Nations" which is alike their goal as well as ours.

They, better than anyone else, can help to find a solution. But they can do so only if they direct their efforts to the real source of the difficulty.

In the last few weeks, that distinguished veteran statesman, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru whose breadth of outlook and courageous initiative played no small a part in the deliberations which led up to the

existing Federal Scheme, brought together in Bombay a number of eminent Indian publicmen outside the two main contending political organizations to consider the situation. In the end, a resolution was passed but I am not quite clear as to how many of those who attended one or more meetings of this Conference actually concurred in the resolution.

That resolution has, since been discussed by Sir Tej with the Viceroy and submitted to His Majesty's Government and has been published. It asked for a complete reconstruction of the Executive Council converting it into one consistent entirely of unofficial Indians drawn from important elements of public life. This new Council would be responsible, while the war is still in progress to the Crown, and not to the Legislature, but it should, in substance, be treated, in regard to all inter Imperial and inter-national matters, on the same footing as a Dominion Government.

The resolution also asked that this reconstruction should be accompanied by an announcement of a definite time-limit within which India is to attain to the same measure of freedom as is enjoyed by the Dominions.

I should be the last to approach in a critical or unsympathetic spirit the proposals brought forward by men of such eminent public service as those who have associated themselves with this resolution or animated by such genuine desire both to promote India's constitutional progress and her active participation in the war effort. I will, therefore, only touch very briefly on some of the more obvious difficulties which such scheme, if it were carried into effect would present in practice.

The scheme proposed by the resolution would amount not to a modification of the present form of Government but to its supersession by an entirely different type of Government. That is, certainly something going beyond what we think practicable in the midst of ever increasing strain and urgency of the war situation.

It would also create internal constitutional problems of no little difficulty both in relation to the Provinces whether those now enjoying self-Government, or those administered under Section 93 and to the Princes and in that and other ways it would raise still unresolved issues of constitutional future.

That brings me to the underlying issue raised, but not faced by the Bombay Resolution. If I may say so, without discourtesy to those who have sponsored it, the resolution seems to me to have been directed to the wrong address.

I have already pointed out that the time table of India's Constitutional advance depends far more upon Indian agreement than upon ourselves. But the same applies to any far-reaching alteration of the present constitutional position.

As I think I have already made clear, our existing proposal for the expansion of the Viceroy's Council is in suspense, not because those concerned—I am leaving the Congress on one side for the moment—condemned the proposal on the ground of inadequacy but mainly because of the difficulty of reconciling the Muslim and Hindu claims for relative position. That difficulty is not lessened, but inevitably enhanced, by any suggestion of a new type of Executive with more extensive powers.

It is unfortunately already evident that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and his friends have not been able to secure beforehand for their scheme any kind of agreement, if not between the Congress and the Muslim League, at any rate between the latter and other representatives of the Hindu majority. Mr Jinnah has since repudiated it as being on 'entirely wrong lines,' and as a trap, to use his phrase, into which Sir Tej had been led by Congress wire-pullers. On the other hand, the General Secretary of the Maha Sabha Party has declared that it will not co-operate in any scheme in which numerical majority of the Hindu element is not reflected in the composition of the Council.

There is obviously no such agreement here as would afford the reconstructed Council political support or even acquiescence in the Legislature. On the other hand, if the reconstructed Council is to be composed not of leaders who, between them, can secure some measure of political backing, but of men individually eminent but politically unsupported, then objections which weighed against that course in the case of an expansion of existing Council becoming much more formidable if it is a question of an entirely new Council with greatly enlarged powers.



It would I think be very difficult to persuade the Parliament to confer Dominion or quasi-Dominion powers on a body so constituted. Nor would such a body between their responsibility to the Crown on the one side and in face of an unfriendly legislature on the other be likely for long to maintain its precarious position.

My appeal to Sir Tej and his friends would therefore be not to cease from their efforts but to concentrate first and foremost on bringing the contending elements in India together. Whether they can best do that by the exercise of their persuasion upon the existing party leaders or by building up a strong central party of men who are prepared to put India first, their efforts may well be decisive in shaping the whole future of their country.

Meanwhile there are other fields besides that of politics in which India's future is being shaped. In Africa, in Malaya and now in Iraq India is establishing her claim to consideration as a major factor in winning of war. Her troops by their gallantry and technical efficiency have made a conspicuous contribution to our victories in Libya and Entrea. They have faced trying ordeals of modern war and faced them largely under the leadership of Indian officers who have amply justified their training and the confidence placed in them.

Her young navy has earned highest commendation from Admiralty for its defatigable work in seas east of Suez. Expansion of her infant air force is only held back against flood of recruits by a still inadequate total supply of machines. Her industries have already made an unprecedented contribution to her war effort.

*(A debate followed in which some of the prominent members closely associated with India subjected Mr Amery's statement to a severe criticism.)*

## Mr. Amery Pats His Own Back

MR AMERY made a second speech in reply to the debate. He said "I do not think there could have been a more satisfactory debate from my point of view, not because honourable members have treated the Secretary of State with consideration and kindness but because of the real value which this debate will have in India when it is read and studied there. The House has shown itself with reference to India to be a truly liberal body. Speeches from all quarters of this House were true reflections of the spirit in which we are waging this war and the cause for which we are fighting. The debate illustrated to the full the fundamental universal goodwill of this House towards India and its aspirations. There were many admirable speeches. I would like to single out not only Earl Winterton but Sir George Schuster and Mr Nicholson, who had exercised the privilege of goodwill, which is to speak frankly and straightly to one's friends and to those whom we do regard as our brothers in spirit.

Universal goodwill towards India is not only characteristic of honourable members of this House but underlies the policy and aims of His Majesty's Government. The policy of the Government announced last autumn offers India far more than ever before and the remarkable thing is that it is the policy not merely of Mr Ammon's friends in the Cabinet or of the present Secretary of State but of the

Prime Minister who only a few years ago was the most stalwart and persistent opponent of the measure of self-government which fell far short of that pledge of complete Dominion Status as soon as Indians can agree after the war

That is evidence surely that on our side there is unity and goodwill which is one of the pre-requisites of constitutional progress in India. It was suggested that we had broken our pledges to India at the end of the last war to confer independence upon her. I would remind the House of the actual pledges given. The Preamble to the Act of 1919 referred to the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. There was no mention of Dominion Status then. In 1929 Lord Halifax, the then Viceroy declared—and truly—that it was implicit in the declarations of 1917 and the Preamble of 1919 that the eventual issue of India's constitutional progress would be the attainment of constitutional independence. But it had never been described as anything but gradual. The great Act of 1935 in no way fell short of the pledges given but even that fell a long way behind the clear declarations of policy made for a united country by a united government last summer. There is no essential difficulty so far as this country's intentions are concerned in India setting on the way to Dominion Status. The difficulty lies not so much in the devolution of authority as in making sure that there is an authority in India which can take over and will not break down or break up in the process. The difficulty does remain and it is no use pretending that it does not in India itself in those divisions in India which have shown themselves with increasing acuteness as the prospect of free government comes nearer.

It is very true that in that difficulty we are confronted by what has been described as a certain sense of frustration or depression. I see no reason why we should yield to that. After all let us remember that little more than a year ago war had been in progress for a good many months and we had not come to any understanding for a union of our political parties and there was in the House and country a considerable sense of frustration in the political situation. As the situation came home to us and the feeling of the ordinary man in the

street came home to the people in politics, they realised that they had to sink political differences for the greater common cause.

I see no reason why this process should not repeat itself in India, also, though we must not forget how deep are the inherent divisions in India and how relatively remote even now war seems to many in India, above all among those whose whole career has been in political agitation and trouble and to whom political interest still seems the dominant one. We have to enable India to get out of that attitude to get rid of the cocoon of old controversies into which elder Indian politicians spin themselves. It is from that point of view that I have welcomed the initiative of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and his friends. I am bound to point to the difficulties inherent in their first proposal because it is largely addressed to the wrong quarter and because it does not face these inherent Indian difficulties which are an obstacle. I certainly hope that these eminent and patriotic men will not cease their efforts, that in one way or another they will try to bring about unity in regard to the whole constitutional future of India. It is for them, far more than for us, to judge the best way of achieving it.

They will try, no doubt, to bring the leaders of the two great organizations together. If they fail, it may well be that they could lay themselves out to get, through their personal eminence, greater measures of popular support from India itself—the building up of a party influential enough to get the attention of Indian parties and to enlist the support of those provincial governments to whose importance in the future constitutional scheme more than one speech has paid its tribute.

There is no need for us to be despondent about the future even if the difficulties are great and even if it is not easy to discover one immediate remedy, above all a remedy devised from here. I assure the House that the Viceroy, to whose unwearied efforts tribute has been paid, will not cease to try to find ways and means of implementing a policy which because it is ours we want to see succeed and carried out. I have no intention either so far as I am concerned or the Viceroy and Government of India are concerned, to look upon this matter with the idea that it should just drift along.

At the same time while there is an element of disappointment and discouragement in the purely political situation in India we should

not overlook the fact that the political controversies in India are not the whole of India's life and outlook. Alongside all this deadlock and wrangles of leading Indian politicians and the more helpful efforts of Indian politicians to straighten out that particular aspect of things, India is day by day feeling her feet, India is prosperous. There is more revenue for Central and Provincial Governments and not only under those Provincial Governments carrying on under democratic institutions but there is great deal of active social progress going on all the time. In the four Provinces conducting their own Governments they are very helpfully contributing to war effort. So is the whole public of India. Generous funds have flowed in from every class for every purpose of war or for mitigation of suffering. One and a half millions for aeroplanes had been provided not only by Rajahs and wealthy industrialists but by the humblest peasants, police men and soldiers. As to what India is doing in the actual field of war I agree that it will be desirable later to have a debate reviewing the broad fields of India's war effort. The building up of an army of half a million in India and going beyond it with each increase of troops sent overseas is proceeding very actively and largely because good foundations were laid for it. Only the other day I received a letter from a distinguished soldier who had visited India after an absence of two years. He expresses his amazement at the progress made in the reshaping of India on the side of munitions.

I am bound to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the expansion of India's fighting strength is conditioned by the provision of modern war equipment and that is conditioned by machine tools and technical and skilled workers.

India could produce two million fighting men. Unfortunately that is not enough. We have seen in the last few weeks a million of the bravest soldiers in the world, men I heard described in the last war as the finest infantry in Europe equipped well according to the standards of the last war scattered to the winds and broken in pieces by the armoured divisions which German foresight—and determination on war—provided while we in our self-delusion allowed locusts to eat the precious years we are now trying to retrieve for ourselves and India. In these matters India is dependent upon us and upon America also and can only slowly make good what ought to have

been made good in previous years. Every effort is being made in that direction. The result of the Delhi Conference has been the setting up in India of the Eastern Group Supply Council with representatives from all governments of Dominions and Colonies east and south of Suez and of a central provision depot for all theatres of war in that part of the world. That is important now and it may be of immense consequence if the war develops in certain directions which we cannot yet foresee.

In the same way every effort is being made to increase India's capacity to produce munitions. Young men are being trained by tens of thousands in India for technical and munition work and a smaller number are being sent for training to this country. Those who come here are trained at training centres and partly under carefully selected employers. They are not actually receiving pay but they receive an allowance for the purchase of suitable clothes and training allowances sufficient to cover the cost of upkeep and accommodation, with weekly pocket money. There are welfare officers specially attached to look after their well-being. I have every hope that the experiment will prove successful and it is widely welcomed in India itself. The training period is six months.

India by the gallantry of her fighting men and the development of her industries is steadily establishing a real claim to equality with ourselves. The main constitutional task is inevitably for the moment far more in the hands of Indians themselves than in ours. We shall give them every help we can.

## Sir George Schuster Shows the Way

*The barrage directed against the Secretary of State's speech was from every quarter of the House. Among these were Sir George Schuster and Sir Stanley Reed who know India intimately and command confidence of Britain. Their respective speeches are reproduced herewith.*

SIR George Schuster (Liberal National) said that nothing could be more distressing than that at the present moment when all these decisions vitally affecting India's future were being taken the Government should rest purely in official hands. But the British Government were in this dilemma. They wanted to transfer power. You could not ask representative Indians to share responsibility unless they had power. But you could not change the whole balance of constitutional power and you could not transfer constitutional power unless you fixed the whole structure of the new constitution. The conflict and disagreement which had already occurred over the 1935 Act as regards the Central Government proved the difficulties that lay

in the way, but to men who trusted each other and wanted to co-operate, the answer was quite easy.

Let leading Indians come in as members of the Viceroy's Council in the same positions in which other Indians had gone into the Council in the past. They would have plenty of power but they must have courage too. They might have to share in unpopular decisions, perhaps they might lose political support for the future. He was sure that there were men in India who had that courage. That was what the Secretary of State offered, but all Indian political leaders, not only the Congress, would not have it. They wanted all sorts of guarantees of their constitutional position and some writers said quite openly that there must be real transfer of constitutional power now, that that was to be the acid test of whether the British Government ever meant *a n y t h i n g*. They said in effect, "We don't trust the British, but if we get the transfer of power now it will be something on which they cannot go back in future." That was just what could not be given short of the formation of a wholly new, properly balanced constitutional structure.

Was it not possible that the Congress' order forcing the Ministries to resign was not merely a gesture of protest but also because Congress saw the danger of a provincial spirit of disunity growing up which might set up loyalties conflicting with loyalty to the Congress? He made no charges but these disquieting questions were being asked by many people and he must confess he was asking them himself. It was disquieting that the leading national party should be taking such a purely negative line seeking nothing but easy popularity which came to those who were against the Government, helping not at all in finding constructive solutions for the many problems of India. It was disquieting that the leading Indian party should not show a greater sense of reality, a truer appreciation of the emergency but that it should recklessly seek to embarrass the British Government when Britain was fighting desperately not merely for her heroic existence but for the freedom of India as well. The most disquieting of all was the suspicion that the real objective of the Congress was to establish party domination of the State in India parallel to the Nazi and Fascist party dominations in Germany and Italy. To the British mind there was an unpleasant familiarity in the course which the Congress Party seemed,



to be forcing Britain to go through. The British Government had made a gesture which they knew in their hearts to mean a real offer of transfer of power. Britain had found no response from the Congress no effort at all to face the necessity of finding some balance among the parties in India and no recession from their demand to be the only party to speak for India. Thus the British Government began to feel that there lay behind all this a very sinister purpose that was being finally unmasked.

They felt these doubts, but perhaps the final stage had not yet been reached. I make no charges. The doubts and questions I have raised might be wrong. I pray that they might be. I appeal to Mr Gandhi to prove them and if it were any help to him "let me add that we are all to blame". The present leader of the Muslim League, Mr Jinnah, was equally unpractical. Let us admit that we had been in the wrong. The British side might have been to blame. Its case might have been put badly and unimaginatively. The Government of India might have been very wooden. I always feel that there were very great difficulties in the handling of negotiations of this kind by the Viceroy. He had to consider his administrative position.

I had always felt that if we admitted blame on the British side there was one person who was not to blame and that was the present Secretary of State. He succeeded to an extremely difficult position and since he had held it he had made repeated, reasonable and most courageous efforts to solve the difficulties. The Commons and the British public were not to blame except possibly for a certain measure of indifference but somehow or other they felt that they had been let down. They felt that they had been so honest in their desire to find a constructive way to do what the Indians wanted and that if only the latter could have understood what was in British minds and what were their purposes this situation could never have been allowed to arise.

I firmly believe also that the great body of Indian opinion did desire to have a free and fair democracy and not party domination and that they were willing to make a constructive effort to help in the solution. In these circumstances what were the British Government to do? I want to say to the Secretary of State "Go on with all possible steps to get repre-

sentative Indians to join in the task of Government not only on the Viceroy's Council, but in the Provinces. Get men no matter what their political status is. Get some of the men who have shown their capacity as Dewans or in fields of commercial and business enterprise as well as well-known people in the political field. Appeal to them that here is a supreme chance of serving India, but do not say it is no use going on if representative parties do not support you." It was ridiculous to claim that there were no Indians capable of being Finance Members.

I cannot see why constitutional discussions in India should not go on during the war. There are immense preliminary problems to be discussed dealing with the essential difficulty of the mixture of communities which might be solved by some form of segregation of administrative units or by some different form of democracy from the form of parliamentary democracy that the British knew. All this required long study and should be tackled now. Could not they get the whole thing going in a different atmosphere? They had all got into the wrong atmosphere by approaching these questions through the leaders of the All-India political parties. These men had never held office, never shown their ability as practical statesmen. There were Provincial Ministries and men in the States who had proved themselves. Why should they not get together and try and start these constitutional discussions in a different atmosphere?

I want to make one more suggestion. It seems so important in these difficult times that we should get closer to India and we want India to get closer to us. Could nothing more be done in that direction? Would it not be possible to bring over a man like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and put him in the House of Lords or we might even have a Congress leader, but anyhow let us have a genuine Indian like him here. Let him send back trusted words to India which would tell what the British people were fighting for now and banish the ridiculous idea that this was only another war for imperialistic purposes. I believe that such a step might have a great effect. Finally I want again to record an appeal to all Indians, who have wisdom and the trust of their own people, to bring these gifts into the common task. Let them be courageous and

strong let them take their chances of their political future in both hands. Let them look back at the record of Congress and say let this be changed. Congress in the past has always said no. You cannot save humanity or recreate a national India by saying no."

### Sir Stanley Depressed With Amery's Speech

Sir Stanley Reed (Conservative) said that in all frankness and sincerity Mr. Amery's speech left him under a sense of depression. It did not take them anywhere, did not lead them any further on the road to a solution of the great problem of closer co-operation between India and the British Commonwealth at the present time. He could not quite reconcile the picture of India under the present regime with that which reached him from many other sources. India had been greatly moved at the position whereby men we knew and admired and with whom we had the closest friendship for many years were now in gaol. It was not a case that men were going to gaol for declining to co-operate with the Government. So far as these punitive measures were being exercised they were being exercised against men who were deliberately obstructing the co-operation of others in the war effort.

Active efforts to prevent others from co-operating was defiance of authority which no Government could pass by without allowing the whole foundation of the rule of law to collapse at a time of infinite peril not only to us but to India as well. When we saw on one side the Indian National Congress demanding complete independence, which must be fatal to India at the present time and the Muslim League on the other hand demanding the splitting of India again into coteries of States which would undo the work of the past one hundred and fifty years, we made the fatal mistake of running away with the idea that these two powerful organized bodies represented the whole of India. I believe that there are very large numbers of members of the Indian National Congress who today would recoil from the idea of complete independence if faced with that issue and if equal and honourable partnership in the British Commonwealth were put before them they would regard that as entirely satisfying their ambitions and providing for Indians full scope for their full national development.

All Muslims do not want the plan advocated by the Muslim League. Was there nothing between the extreme

view of the Congress on the one side and the extreme view of Muslim League on the other to whom Mr. Amery could make his direct appeal and to whom he could direct his energies with a view to bringing them within the fabric of administration ? There was a very great body in India not associated with either of these two political organisations True, it had not the same efficient political propaganda and political machinery, but it represented a great body of the thought in India He sometimes thought that there was a certain parallel in what we called Indian Liberals and the Liberals in England Liberalism in England was a far more important force in this country than was represented by the Liberal Party in the Commons So it was in India There was a great body of Liberal thought bent on constructive work for its country within the Commonwealth

How are we to get rid of the suspicion that exists and convince India that we are determined to see India attain full status as a Dominion ? The only way this miasma could be swept away, is by attempting to bring representatives of that school direct into the Government of India I ask Mr Amery to go back again and not to leave his task until he had found some means of harnessing this great body of broad liberal patriotism and constructive thought in the machinery of the Government of India, not to be deterred by constitutional niceties, not to be frightened away by the idea whether this was strictly correct War was now approaching the borders of India There is no one here who did not fully appreciate the value, strength and immensity of the Indian war effort There is none who has not been profoundly moved by the gallantry and *elan* of Indian troops in Libya and East Africa That was not enough We had to mobilise the whole moral and political force and enthusiasm of as many people in India as could possibly be mobilised in that direction

In conclusion, I ask Mr Amery to consider again and again proposals which came from men of goodwill and patriotism with a view to seeing whether steps could now be taken whereby India might feel that not only her armed forces, munitions and her industries and interests were behind the war effort but the heart and soul of a great and generous people

*The country wide reaction evoked by the Secretary of State's speech found expression in a spate of statements issued by leaders of every school of thought and political inclination. Select statements are reproduced in the following pages.*

## The Savant Speaks out

(*Mahatma Gandhi's Statement*)

I HAVE read painfully the long report of the debate in the House of Commons on India

Distress has been known to have softened people's hearts and made them mindful of facts. But Britain's distress has evidently left Mr Amery absolutely cold and untouched. This callousness makes me more than ever confirmed in my opinion that the Congress must abide by its policy of non-violence in spite of heavy odds facing it.

Mr Amery has rendered no service to Great Britain by his contemptuous disregard of the situation as it exists in India and the facts that stare one in the face. He talks glibly of British rule having given peace to India.

Did he not know what was happening in Dacca and Ahmedabad? Who was responsible for keeping peace in these two places? I hope he will not throw in my face the fact that Bengal at any rate has Self-Government. He knows what a mockery that Self-Government is. He knows what little power for such emergencies toy Ministers have whether they wear the Congress label, the League label or any other.

I ask the very pertinent question why has this long spell of British rule left the people so emasculated as to disable them from standing up against a few hundred *gundas*?

It is a humiliating spectacle more for the British than for us to see thousands of people running away from their homes through sheer fright, because a few hundred *gundas* have found a favourable atmosphere for resorting to arson, murder and loot. The first act of any Government worth the name would be to teach its people the art of self-defence but the foreign British Government had no concern about this fundamental welfare of India's citizens and so it deprived the people of the use of arms.

All the handsome tribute that Mr. Amery pays to Indian troops falls flat on Indian soil because leaving aside Congress non-violence for the time being if India had been equipped and trained for self-defence and if India had become a voluntary ally of Great Britain I hold that all European Powers combined for destruction would not have touched Great Britain.

Mr. Amery has insulted Indian intelligence by reiterating *ad nauseum* that Indian political parties have but to agree among themselves and Great Britain will register the will of a united India. I have repeatedly shown that it has been the traditional policy of Great Britain to prevent parties from uniting.

Divide and rule has been Great Britain's proud and ill-conceived motto.

It is the British statesmen who are responsible for the divisions in India's ranks and divisions will continue so long as the British sword holds India under bondage.

I admit that there is unfortunately an unbridgeable gulf between the Congress and the Muslim League. Why do not British statesmen admit that it is after all a domestic quarrel? Let them withdraw from India and I promise that the Congress and the League and all other parties will find it to their interest to come together and devise a home-made solution for the Government of India.

It may not be scientific it may not be after any western pattern but it will be durable. It may be that before we come to that happy state of affairs, we may have to fight amongst ourselves. But if we

agree not to invite the assistance of any outside power, the duel will last perhaps a fortnight and it will not mean even one day's destruction of human heads such as goes on in Europe today for the simple reason that thanks to the British Rule we are wholly unarmed

Mr Amery in utter disregard of truth misleads his ignorant audience that the Congress wants "all or nothing"

Let me remind him that in order to placate British sentiment the Congress descended to the Poona resolution and when at Bombay it undid the Poona resolution, I authoritatively stated that the British Government could not at the present moment grant or declare India's independence and that, therefore, for the time being we should be satisfied with complete freedom of speech and pen. Was that "all or nothing"?

With Mr Amery's state of mind, I suppose it is too much to expect him to have the elementary grace to acknowledge the studied moderation of the Congress in its desire not to embarrass the British Government whilst it is fighting for its very existence

Not having that grace he turns the Congress moderation against it and claims that the Congress Civil Disobedience has fallen flat

It took my breath away when I read his statement about India's prosperity. I say from experience that it is a legendary thing

India's millions are becoming progressively pauperised. They are miserably clothed and underfed. Because there is one man's rule he is able to produce a budget of millions. But I make bold to say that it is not only no proof of the prosperity of the famishing millions but proof positive that India is being ground down under the British heel

But I must not carry any further painful dissection of Mr Amery's performance

It hurts me to have to undertake even this very brief analysis of his speech. But it is so amazingly misleading that I felt I should be failing in my duty if I did not point out at least some of the most glaring discrepancies in that unfortunate utterance. Surely he could have rested content with the undisputed sway that he exercises over the destinies of over four hundred million people



## Even Moderates Disillusioned

THE following is the full text of the statement issued by the Standing Committee of the Bombay Conference

The Standing Committee have read Mr Amery's speeches in the House of Commons with the care which they deserve. The Committee very much regret that the speeches should have betrayed such an amazing misunderstanding of the real political situation in India and displayed such an unsympathetic and unbending attitude towards the aspirations of India. The Committee feel that Mr Amery has missed the opportunity of winning public confidence which was offered to the British Government with the best intentions by those who have a vivid appreciation of the dangers of the international situation. They have, however, reason to apprehend that one certain effect of these speeches will be to strengthen the forces of disruption in the country and to create the impression that in point of fact the British Government have no desire to part with real power at this juncture.

The Committee regret very much that Mr Amery should have adopted an attitude of self-complacency with regard to the position in India which was bound to create a wrong impression in Parliament and probably on a larger audience in America that the present system

of Government in India commands not only the acquiescence of the people of this country but also their goodwill. The Committee have no hesitation in saying that this is a complete travesty of the situation in India.

They, however, note with satisfaction that there were men in Parliament belonging to different parties, some with considerable knowledge of India, such as Sir Stanley Reed and Sir George Schuster, who controverted Mr. Amery's assumptions then and there and warned him against the wisdom and unfairness of his policy of drift at a time of such grave peril. The Committee feel, however, that it would be unfair to Mr. Amery to hold him wholly responsible for creating this impression as the original responsibility for giving a true estimate of the situation in India rests with the Government of India.

No one in this country, and no one particularly connected with the Bombay Conference, has ever minimized the desirability of reconciliation between the two important political bodies of India—the Congress and the Muslim League.

The President of the Bombay Conference was not unmindful of the desirability of removing the misunderstanding at an early date, and he made endeavours before the Conference met at Bombay to explore the possibilities of bringing the contending parties together. The organizers of the Conference were, however, satisfied that in view of the fundamental differences between the Congress and the Muslim League there was no prospect within a reasonable distance of time of those contending parties coming together. The Conference felt, at the same time, that it was intolerable that the progress of the country should be held up by His Majesty's Government merely because the two contending parties would not or could not compose their differences.

In this connection the Committee would refer to the statement made by His Excellency the Viceroy on August 8 last.

"It is clear," said His Excellency, "that the earlier differences which had prevented the achievement of national unity remain unbridged. Deeply as His Majesty's Government regret this they do not feel that they should any longer, because of these differences, postpone the expansion of the Governor-General's Council." For Mr. Amery now to insist agreement as a condition precedent to any change at the

Centre is really to go back on the declared policy of His Majesty's Government.

The Committee would like the Secretary of State to consider whether the repetition of the advice that Indians should first settle their differences among themselves before expecting any constitutional change could absolve him from the reproach so pointedly made by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad in his recent statement on Mr. Amery's speech. "However profuse the assurances of the British Government may be as regards their intentions to make India a self-governing dominion, no political party is convinced because of past experience of the British Government's sincerity as regards parting with power."

In view of the growing dangers to India from the war those who assembled at Bombay put forward certain proposals which they were satisfied were practicable, and which if accepted would have had an excellent psychological effect on the country and stimulated genuine voluntary war effort to a much greater extent. The present policy of the Secretary of State is bound to have a deleterious effect on the minds of the people and on the situation in India for which the entire responsibility must be his and of his advisers in India.

Practically the present position of the Secretary of State is that until it pleases Mr. Jinnah to approve of any scheme His Majesty's Government can do nothing to give effect even to their own intentions as announced in August last. Mr. Amery has referred to an unworthy insinuation made by Mr. Jinnah in his speech at Madras to the effect that the Bombay Conference was held in consultation with or at the instigation of some Congress leaders in the interests of the Congress. The Committee repudiate this categorically. The Committee would not have noticed such an aspersion but for the fact that the Secretary of State referred to it in his speech in the House of Commons to the prejudice of the Conference and its organizers.

It is not difficult to understand the working of the mind of the Secretary of State. He assumed that in seven provinces where the constitutional machinery of government had been replaced by the personal rule of Governors people were contented with the system of administration—an assumption which if true must bar out all proposals of advance even after the war. He apparently thought that the attitude of the Hindus did not require to be taken seriously into

account, whereas he assumed that the Muslim League in its present state of intransigence represented the attitude of all the Muslims of India, or of an overwhelming majority of them, even though provinces like Sind and the North-West Frontier Province and considerable sections of Muslims in other provinces repudiate the authority and policy of the Muslim League and the leadership of Mr Jinnah. These facts should in fairness have been brought to the notice of the House of Commons.

The Secretary of State has advised the Conference as to what it should do in future. Its members are, according to him, to devote their energies to bringing about a settlement between the Congress and the League and, failing that, to attempt to form a centre party. Meanwhile, they are to remain satisfied with his promise of Dominion Status at an indefinite date with an unrepresentative and uninfluential Centre and personal rule in seven provinces. The Standing Committee are compelled, in view of their knowledge of the country, to reject this advice for reasons of which Mr Amery and his advisers in India cannot surely be ignorant. The Conference at Bombay was concerned with the immediate future during the war and not with long-range policies which must bide their time. Even if a centre party were to emerge after a number of years, what guarantee is there that its proposals would receive any better treatment than have the united demands of Indian politicians in the past? The burden of the Secretary of State's speech is that before he can be prepared to consider any proposal there must be the prior approval of Mr Jinnah—a position which no self-respecting political party can accept or tolerate.

The Committee desire to meet some of Mr Amery's objections and raise some questions with regard to them. One of his objections is that the Conference proposal would mean, not a modification of the present form of Government, but its supersession by an entirely different form of Government. The present Government consists of four officials and two non-official Indians in addition to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief. All the members of the Government are at present appointed by the Crown and are responsible to it. The Committee understand that under the proposals made last August by the British Government the number of official members was to be reduced to two and the total strength of the Executive Council increased to 11. The Conference have proposed no change either in

respect of the appointing authority or in their responsibility of the members of the Government to the Crown. All that it has suggested is that not only two but all the four official members should be replaced by non-officials. Does such a proposal amount to a suppression of the present system of Government?

The Secretary of State has chosen not to show his hand. The Committee are entitled to ask the British Government what their concrete proposals are. Does the Secretary of State object to the transfer of the important portfolios of Finance and Defence and if so why? Sir George Schuster himself the Finance Member of the Government of India from 1928 until 1934 expressed his belief in the House of Commons that competent Indians could be found for the Finance portfolio. The Committee have equally little doubt that a competent Indian can be found for the Defence portfolio. The Conference did not, as will appear from the resolution, want to affect the position and responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief and as both he and the Defence Member would be appointed by the Crown it should not be difficult to adjust their mutual relations. The only construction that the Committee can put on the position taken by Mr Amery is that key portfolios would not be transferred to Indian hands. It is quite clear from this that even if there had been a previous agreement between the main political parties these portfolios would not have been entrusted to Indian members.

Another point which has been raised by the Secretary of State is that the reconstructed Government would not get political support or even acquiescence from the Legislature. This objection was fully dealt with in Sir A. N. Sircar's speech.

The total strength of the Legislative Assembly is 143. Out of these, the Congress and the Muslim League combined total only about 60. They would be unable to defeat the Government without the help of other parties. In the absence of the Congress the Congress Nationalist Party is the second largest party in the Assembly and its leader Mr Aney has publicly supported the Bombay Conference proposals and is a member of this Committee. Considering that the proposal of the Bombay Conference was that the Executive should be responsible to the Crown and not to the Legislature the argument of a possible conflict between the Legislature and the Executive loses

much of its force, but even assuming that at times the Governor-General is compelled to resort to his power of certification, it is difficult to understand how his position would become worse if he were asked by the reconstituted Government to exercise that power than it is now when he does so upon the recommendation of a mixed Council consisting partly of officials and partly of non-officials.

All this fear of conflict between the Legislature and the Government reconstituted on national lines seems to be extremely hypothetical as it assumes unreasonableness on the part of the Legislature and inability on the part of the Government to influence it.

It has further been suggested that the reconstituted Council would create internal constitutional problems in relation to the Provinces and to the Princes. But even with the partial transfer suggested by the Secretary of State last year, there would have been a majority of non-officials in the Executive Council, and if they were disposed to interfere with the discretionary powers of the Governor-General, then the constitutional difficulties mentioned by the Secretary of State would still remain. There is not the remotest reason to assume that Indians in such positions would work in an unreasonable spirit, or would unnecessarily obstruct the Governor-General in the discharge of his responsibilities. Such technical objections presuppose a determination on the part of those who will be selected by the Viceroy to paralyse or to offer obstruction in the smooth running of the Government. On such a supposition no constitutional advance can now or ever be made.

The pertinent questions which the Committee would wish the Secretary of State to answer are, "What is the interpretation to be placed on the following declaration which Mr. Amery made on behalf of His Majesty's Government on August 11, 1940: 'In spite of the discouraging attitude shown in Congress quarters, I still hope that they will be willing to take their part. If that should unfortunately not prove to be the case, Lord Linlithgow will of course go ahead, prepared to work with those who will work with him and with each other'?" Is it the Secretary of State's latest view that unless Mr. Jinnah, as the Head of the Muslim League, is willing to cooperate on his own terms, the cooperation of all other parties is of no political value

whatever to the British Government? If that is not the intention, he should say so in explicit terms.

The other question which the Committee desire to ask is Whether his advisers in India sincerely believe that it is possible at the present moment for Mr Jinnah to come to terms with the Congress or any other major party in India?

The Committee are utterly unable to follow the Secretary of State's reasoning that it would be very difficult to persuade Parliament to confer dominion or *quasi* dominion status powers on a reconstructed Executive Council. The resolution had suggested that in regard to inter imperial and international matters the reconstructed Government should be treated on the same footing as the coming in Government. During and since the last war the right of the Government of India to be represented at such conferences has been recognized invariably in practice. India has had particularly since her admission to the League of Nations as one of its original members indirect representation, not only at the annual conferences of the League and its auxiliary at Geneva, but also at imperial and international conferences whenever they have been called. It seems unthinkable that 20 years after such a principle has been in practice the Secretary of State should refuse to concede the point that Indian delegations to such conferences should be appointed by the Government of India and receive their instructions from them.

As regards the demand of the conference that a time limit should be prescribed for the inauguration of Dominion Status after the termination of the war the committee attach considerable importance to it as without such a time limit the country cannot feel sure that India will get Dominion Status and Dominion powers within a reasonable distance of time. It is surely not right to cast the whole burden on the shoulders of Indian statesmen, and the Committee feel that it is not impossible to arrive at a formula under which, in certain given circumstances, the time limit fixed may be extended, if necessary by another short period.

The Committee are not unmindful of the consideration that at this grave moment the thoughts of Englishmen are naturally concentrated on the war. They need increasing help—more men, more money

more material. The Committee and the people of this country at large are no less concerned in the outcome of the war and are most anxious to help to the utmost in its prosecution, as it is seriously threatening the fate of India. But they feel that such help will not come in abundance unless at this critical juncture the present policy of drift is abandoned and Indians are placed in positions of real power and responsibility.



## Sapru Slashes Out

**SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU** Chairman of the Bombay Leaders Conference has issued the following statement —

“The Standing Committee of the Bombay Conference has already issued a statement on Mr Amery's speech in the House of Commons. There are however certain matters to which I should like to refer in my personal statement

I was most reluctant hitherto to say publicly that for nearly two months before the Conference met at Bombay I did all I could in my individual capacity to bring Mahatma Gandhi and Mr Jinnah together. Even now I should not like to disclose without their permission any thing of the correspondence that passed between them and me

All that I can say is that I have not been unmindful of the need for a communal settlement. Indeed since December last when I issued my first statement and again in January when I wrote an article in the “Twentieth Century” I have been emphasising the need of these two leaders meeting each other. I gave this suggestion of mine the first place among the several suggestions that I made

I am surprised to note that Mr Amery's speech shows that he is unaware of it as I presumed that he would know something of it after conversations with the Viceroy

This is not the time for me to apportion blame between the leaders. I regret to say that my efforts bore no fruit. As matters stand now I am more than doubtful if the chances of a settlement between the two parties can be looked at all bright,

Mr Jinnah's speech at Madras and Mr. Gandhi's recent pronouncement show that if anything the gulf is wider than ever before.

It was just when I was carrying on this correspondence that a European member of the Legislature who has since been criticising the Bombay Conference wrote to me as follows

"I have been feeling for some time that His Majesty's Government ought to take the initiative in the matter of a communal agreement. It is no use merely saying that such an agreement is a pre-requisite to any further constitutional discussions and then leaving it at that. That was and still is my view

Those who talk of an agreement being a pre-requisite of further constitutional changes should not in my opinion content themselves with making repeated references to them but should also take a hand in promoting such settlement

I have seen no evidence of that either in England or in India. Long range discussions and criticisms of the internal situation cannot help the people and do not redound to the credit of the Government "

Mr Amery says in his speech that we have not been able to secure beforehand for our scheme any kind of agreement if not between the Congress and the Muslim League at any rate between the latter and other representatives of the Hindu majority,

Surely this new condition which is now so solemnly put forward by Government could not have been absent from the minds of those who were responsible for making the declaration on August 8, and if it was present to their minds then why did they not say that time that no kind of change in the constitution would be brought about except with agreement between the major contending parties?

During the Round Table Conference discussions when Mr Ramsay MacDonald consulted me about the Communal Award I told him point blank that if I were a British Prime Minister I should not undertake that responsibility and yet notwithstanding the fact that there was no agreement between the Hindus and the Muslims Mr MacDonald's Government which consisted also of Conservatives went on with their scheme, gave first the communal award and then introduced the India Bill.

Bluntly put, Mr Amery is mortgaging our future to certain intractable leaders.

Expediencies of the hour are not always consistent with lasting policies seeking to achieve the permanent good of a vast country like India.

Has Mr Amery such permanent policy? If so what steps is he taking to implement that policy? What is his real contribution to the solution of the communal tangle? Is he not by his speeches making the task of those who want a real settlement more and more difficult? Is he strengthening the faith of Indians in British intentions?

In ordinary circumstances, I should not have taken notice of what Mr Jinnah said about me or the Conference over which I presided at Bombay and I should certainly not have followed his example by lowering the level of public controversy by indulging in personalities.

Let me, however say that I am not aware of any kind of wire pullers Congress or non-Congress and during my long public life have never known anybody laying any kind of trap for me.

These are clap-trap methods of controversy intended to create prejudice against those from whom you differ and I am surprised that Mr Amery a seasoned politician and one accustomed to dealing with public controversies, should have even referred to what Mr Jinnah said about the wire pullers having laid a trap for me.

I can only assume that like several Europeans in India who have been publicly in their speeches saying that the Bombay Conference was really inspired by Congress Mr Amery is obsessed with the same idea.

I can only say that not a word passed between Mr Gandhi or any other Congress leader and myself at any time either in correspondence or in personal conversation with regard to the idea of holding the Bombay Conference or to the character of the resolution it should adopt

I may, however, say that when the presidentship of the Conference was offered to me, I made it a condition precedent to my accepting it that no kind of communal issue should be raised

I was more than gratified that men like Mr Savarkar and Dr. Moonje who were present at the Conference played the game and accepted the resolution

They are men with strong party convictions and yet for the sake of a settlement they subordinated their party feelings to the common goal we had in view. I should have expected in fairness that Mr. Amery would have drawn the attention of the House to this fact

Let me say once again that I take the fullest responsibility for my judgment—it may be right or it may be wrong—but I have never in my life felt that anybody had laid a trap for me neither a Secretary of State nor a political leader in India

Mr Amery has appealed to me and my friends not to cease from our efforts to concentrate first and foremost on bringing the contending elements together or on building up a strong Centre Party of men who are prepared to put India first. I shall be absolutely frank.

I believe Mr Amery's indiscreet and unfortunate speeches on this subject have done the worst service to us and he has no business to make that pious appeal to us when he himself has done nothing to promote unity among the contending elements in India.

As regards our continuing these efforts, I shall be very glad if those in India who parrot like repeat Mr Amery's pious sentiments will do something to show that they are in earnest about it

So far as I am concerned, I do not want any encouragement from any quarter nor shall I feel discouraged in carrying out my convictions merely because the Secretary of State who is credited with having good intentions has the unfortunate knack of expressing those good intentions in such language

As regards the formation of a Centre Party all that I wish to say is that I do not see any prospect of such a party coming into existence or functioning effectively so long as the present policy of Mr Amery and of the Government of India is maintained.

At the same time I should not like to stand in the way of those of my friends in Bombay and elsewhere who have a faith in the formation of such a party. I would wish them every success but let them take steps and not merely repeat what Mr Amery has been saying from a distance of 6 000 miles.

I am very doubtful if a Centre Party was brought into existence it would fare better at the hands of Mr Amery or the Government of India.

They would dispose of it easily by saying that it did not contain an adequate number of Muslims or the Depressed Classes, that it had not yet developed a sufficient backing in the country and that it was bound to meet with opposition on the part of the Congress or the Muslim League—a fear which seems to have unnerved and indeed paralysed both Mr Amery and the Government of India.

## Indignation Abounding

**MR. V N CHANDAVARKAR**, President, National Liberal Federation of India, issued the following statement, on April 23, on Mr Amery's statement in the House of Commons.

I have hastily gone through the opening and closing speeches of the Secretary of State for India and also the speeches of other members who took part in last night's debate in the House of Commons. As pointed out by Sir Stanley Reed, Mr Amery's speech is bound to create a 'deep sense of depression and a spirit of hopelessness in the minds of those who have been working strenuously to bring about a better understanding between the British and Indian Nations. I entirely agree with Sir Stanley Reed that the speech of the Secretary of State does not lead us anywhere. There is nothing new in the speech and he is continuously harping upon his first slogan that the problem has to be solved on the soil of India by Indians themselves. He forgets that the real problem is the problem of better understanding, of closer and enthusiastic co-operation between England and India in the war effort.

If one had time, one could point out several inconsistencies in Mr Amery's speech. The fact of the matter is that Mr Amery is really satisfied and happy with

the present state of things. His attitude seems to be, 'We are getting the money we are getting the men and we are getting the munitions from India. Why worry and disturb the present state of affairs?' Such an attitude is, to my mind, very short sighted and in the long run, is bound to lead to unhappy and disastrous consequences.

I quite realise that the proposals of the Bombay Conference which it must be mentioned, had the support of the President and the Working President of the Hindu Mahasabha, were not an ideal solution of the problem, but in view of the attitude of the two major parties in the country they seem to be the only possible means of bringing about a closer association, in India's war effort, of that large section of the Indian public, which is outside the Congress and the Muslim League. Mr Amery's attitude is all the more surprising to me since in England, in spite of the critical times through which the country is passing every attempt is being made to keep Parliament and the Press going so that the Government of the day can keep their fingers on the pulse of the nation.

The point at issue is not whether people in India have or have not protested against the suspension of the Constitution in the seven Provinces but what is the best method of securing as pointed out by Sir Stanley Reed closer co-operation between India and the British Commonwealth at the present time.

Mr Amery advises Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to form a Centre Party. Such a Centre Party can be formed and worked only on the basis of faith in British statesmanship. There is no doubt that there is a growing lack of such faith among a large section of the public in this country. If the Bombay Conference proposals were accepted in the entirety and worked in a spirit of generosity and magnanimity I am sure confidence in British statesmanship will be restored and a substantial section of the Indian public who do not like the Congress and the Muslim League methods and who are only waiting for a genuine gesture of friendship from the British Government will provide the basis for the formation of a Centre Party. Let the British Government tell us definitely that they are prepared to deliver the goods within a definite time after the end of the war and that in the meantime as a gesture of their goodwill and good faith they will democratise the Central Government on the lines suggested by the Bombay Conference and I feel sure the situation will be so changed

as to wean away people from the barren path of non-co-operation and communal intransigence

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→ **MR K. M. MUNSHI**, ex-Home Minister, Government of Bombay issued the following statement

After Mr Amery's last speech, nothing that an Indian can say or do will serve any practical purpose

I do not know whether any British Statesmen are left who can in this emergency, take a long distance view of the Indian situation. But during the last few days, when India, the world and perhaps history, are passing through their most critical phase, I feel that I would be failing in my duty if I did not frankly state my views on the crisis

For many years now, I have yearned to see India entering into a free and equal partnership with Britain in a commonwealth of democratic nations. In my humble sphere I have striven to help in the efforts to achieve this goal

Last year, when attempts were being made to bring about an Indo-British understanding, two things appeared to be clear beyond controversy. First, it was to the interests both of India and of Britain to preserve the integrity of India's present frontiers, secondly, a national Government—using the word in the widest sense—at the Indian centre would be the greatest stabilising force in Asia. Great opportunities were lost when Britain failed to organise the Government of India in the light of these truths. If they had not been so lost India would have been ready by now to contribute its effective might in defence of democracy.

During the last few days a new situation, fraught with tragic possibilities, is developing for India. Unless all the signs point wrongly, within a few months—perhaps weeks—the war will not be waged to retain the world supremacy for Britain but to preserve the frontiers of India. A decisive axis triumph on any of the frontiers will break up its integrity, which is no less important to her than her national freedom.

At such a crisis the internal situation in the country is anything but satisfactory. No doubt, the protagonists of the "strong



hand and no damned nonsense" are happy at their jobs. Indians are daily being fed on stories of British resistance or urged to buy off all danger by subscribing to the war fund. But there is another side of the picture to which Britain is, or pretends to be blind.

The average Indian is convinced that on one pretext or another India is kept out of his due share in the country's government.

We Congressmen—the natural allies of Britain, if the war is for democracy—went into wilderness after our offer to fight the war if India were granted national government was turned down. No self-respecting national organisation can do less. About twenty thousand of us are in jail. Many more thousands will court arrest before the war is over. Every arrest means increasing estrangement between Britain and India. It is easy to belittle the movement but it brings out in sharp relief the fact that India does not consider the war hers.

Mr. Jinnah is reported to have said at Madras that if the Britisher does not let him disrupt India somebody else will come and do it for him. The Frankenstein which the British power raised to save it from national India has been proving its unmaking.

In a letter purporting to be from a Muslim in Europe to a Muslim Leaguer published in some newspapers, India is sought to be divided thus: Bombay and Madras to go to Italy; Burma, Bengal and Bihar to Japan; United and Central Provinces to be mandated; and a new country to be brought into existence stretching from Turkey to United Provinces.

An English journal recently testified to pro-Japanese feeling in Burma and all sections of Indian opinion anti-Japanese. The bitterness that has come over the Liberals was voiced by the mildest of them, Sir Cowasji, when he said that their lot was to subscribe to the war fund and knit stockings; even the ex-members of the Viceroy's Council who have stood outside politics have displayed their dissatisfaction in no uncertain terms. When the war broke out India to a man was pro-British. How much of it is left which in the heart of hearts, has any sympathy for Britain? What else can be expected if Britain takes pains to keep India a subservient instrument rather than an enthusiastic partner?

Sense of 'frustration has seized the Indian mind Is this a healthy state of mind, when a supreme effort is required to meet the new crisis? It was 'easy to rouse India to such an effort—though perhaps belated The British statesmen who count could have made a straight-forward appeal to India to join hands with the British to save India's integrity They could have formally assured India of a free and equal partnership in a world commonwealth of democratic countries after the war They could have without any difficulty enlarged the Indian centre and invited to it Indians of standing who believe in and are pledged to preserve such integrity They could have invited the Congress to review the situation in the light of the new crisis and conceded freedom of speech on conscientious grounds They could have assured political parties that this war measure was without prejudice to their respective claims, which, after the war, would be considered when India decided its constitution as a member of the commonwealth Some such step could have created no difficulty On the contrary it would have stirred India to its depth The Congress more likely than not would have stood aloof, but though it might not have helped, it might equally not have hindered The Hindu Sabha and the Muslim League would have certainly responded

But that was not to be Britain lost a great opportunity The British statesmen think that they are getting all they want from India and need no more They believe that Mr Amery's occasional outbursts on the August offer and on the British readiness to implement it, once the bad boys in India learn to behave, are just the right things to keep Indians in love with Britain They are confident that if the need arises the British army can fight both Indian fronts successfully, even if the Indian opinion is indifferent or sullen And they are convinced that no forces need be mobilised in the country which would spontaneously work to maintain India's frontiers and repress disruptive tendencies, external and internal

The fact of the matter is that deep down in the British mind there is a distrust of all Indians, whether be he Gandhiji or Sir Tej Bahadur This is most unfortunate for Britain as for India

India is an unfortunate country We have suffered terribly in the past on account of the vagaries of our foreign rulers We are

Mr Amery has put his finger on the only two courses that were open to the Conference to take if the present deadlock was to be dissolved. At the Conference I pleaded that members assembled should face realities and do one of two things, viz., bring the Congress and the Muslim League together and make them arrive at an agreed solution or organise a new Centre Party which will go to the country with a programme to secure the support of the electorates and be in a position to deliver the goods, brushing aside the present warring parties which have adopted an intransigent attitude.

To ask for the formation of the Executive Council of the Governor-General consisting of all Indians, however clever and able, but not having the support of the Legislatures, would be a remedy worse than the disease. Such a Council will not have the confidence of the public and will have to carry on by certification.

On a former occasion, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, along with Mr M. R. Jayakar played an important part in bringing the Congress and Government together during the Viceroyalty of Lord Irwin. One would welcome a further attempt to remove the misunderstandings between the various political parties who can then unitedly insist upon the British Government to part with power. From the very beginning I was convinced that the line that the Conference proposed to take would invite a rebuff and it has got it.

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**SIR S RADHAKRISHNAN** expressed the following views on Mr Amery's speech

"The way in which the proposals of the Bombay Conference have been treated by the Secretary of State indicates that even in this crisis, Britain is not willing to part with power in India" declared Sir S Radhakrishnan in the course of an interview on the India debate in the Commons. He continued

The war in Europe and Africa is assuming a very serious character. It looks as if India will be in the danger zone in a more direct way soon. The most urgent need, in these circumstances, is a friendly understanding between Great Britain and India and complete trust in each other. But estrangement is getting wider and wider. I say it with the deepest sorrow that there is not much any

imaginative vision or courageous statesmanship among British leaders at this critical hour.

Indian of all shades of political opinion are bitterly opposed to totalitarian creeds. They were very anxious to indentify themselves with the Democratic cause at the beginning of the war. But when India was declared a belligerent without the consent of her people or leaders, she felt she was treated as a vassal State, being required to carry out the dictates of Britain. Gandhiji, as the custodian of the conscience of the country, made a moral protest yet, in his anxiety not to embarrass Britain, Gandhiji adopted satyagraha with limited scope. He could have swept the country and instilled into the people a spirit of opposition, but he did not wish to hamper war effort. There is abundance of goodwill for Britain and anxiety to stand by Britain, and yet, by sheer stupidity and self-will, all these moral resources are being wasted to the detriment of both Britain and India.

The speech of the Secretary of State for India betrays a desire to seek a dialectical victory rather than a real solution of the complex Indian problem. He refers to the communal problem as the greatest obstacle. No one can deny the reality of the communal problem, but it is not necessary for the purpose to assume that all politically minded Muslims are in sympathy with the extreme and unrepresentative official opinion of the Muslim League. Muslims of the N W F P and Sind, the Proja Party in Bengal, the Shikhs, Momins and Ahrars, the Jamiat-ul-ulema and Congress Muslims, among others, are not with Mr Jinnah. The Premiers of the Punjab and Bengal became members of the Muslim League only after their election. Though nominally members of the League, their policies in the provinces with reference to war effort have little in common with the policy of the Muslim League.

It must be most mortifying to the true Englishman to find that his work all these decades for building up a united India has come to naught. He cannot escape responsibility, however, for the communal cleavages. Some years ago, Mr Lionel Curtis wrote regarding separate electorate India will never attain unity and nationhood as long as communal electorates remain. The longer they remain the more difficult will it be to uproot them, till in the end, they will be only eradicated at the cost of a civil war. To enable India to attain nation-

hood is the trust laid on us and in agreeing to the establishment of communal representation, we have been false to that trust. The honest Britisher must feel repentance for the mischief he has caused and do his best to undo it, even at this late hour

The way in which the proposals of the Bombay Conference are treated by the Secretary of State, indicates that even in this crisis, Britain is not willing to part with power in India. A Cabinet consisting of non-official Indians may not have a large political following but as Gandhiji said, he would accept it as the sign of a change of heart in British rulers. Those who voted for the Poona resolution may be expected to support such a Government. It is not unlikely that Gandhiji may call off satyagraha reserving to himself and other believers in non-violence the right to preach against war as such. Congress Governments may get back into power in the provinces. Men like Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan and Mr Fazlul Huq will support such a Government. At a time when Law and Order require to be maintained Indian Governments at the Centre and in the Provinces, are urgently necessary

I am distressed we do not have a Churchill at the India Office one who had the boldness to proclaim some months ago an Anglo-French Union. Indians must be made to feel that this is a war waged not for the perpetuation of Indian subjection in the name of minorities and vested interests, but for leading mankind into a happy and just order. The statement of the Secretary of State is a confession of the moral failure of Britain in India. It is a sad commentary on war aims that where Britain has power she is unwilling to use it for the benefit of India and the world. I appeal to the British Prime Minister to face the Indian problem and solve it in an honest way and in a true democratic spirit."

DR. H. C. MOOKERJEE, the well known Nationalist and leader of the Indian Christian community made the following statement on Mr. Amery's speech

The recent debate in the House of Commons has made it clear that there has not appeared any change in the attitude of the British Government. The Secretary of State has once again drawn attention

to our internal differences and stated that the achievement of further progress would depend on our arrival at an agreement among ourselves. We have been further told that India's war effort is establishing her claims to equality with Britain. After the shortcomings of the Congress and the League have been pointed out, the hope is expressed that nationalists outside these two organisations would build up a strong centre party before their claims could be heard.

When the Congress and the League made it clear that they would not participate in the war effort, we were told that they did not represent the views of large sections of the population. When the non-party leaders formulated certain proposals in which they whittled down the various demands for independence, Dominion Status, etc., to a demand for an All-Indian Executive Council, we are told that they have no political backing to speak of. Every proposal can be objected to on some ground or another. A formula to which no objection can be taken is an impossibility, and yet, this is what is demanded of India as a prerequisite to further extension of political power.

In his reply to the debate Mr. Amery waxed eloquent on the liberality and the fundamental universal goodwill shown by Parliament towards India. We in India feel that one satisfactory proof of this liberality and goodwill is for Britain herself to do something towards the removal of our internal difficulties. In that light the speech of the Secretary of State which reiterates the old formula that the solution must be found by Indians themselves does not appear very helpful.

The time has come when not only India but Britain herself must face realities. It is necessary for Britain to understand that, just as all parties are united in their detestation of totalitarianism, similarly all parties are united in a demand for a much larger measure of self-government than what India enjoys today. It is wisdom's part to make an authoritative declaration which will ensure the coming back of popular ministries and which will enthrone India to throw her full weight on the side of the democratic powers.

Britain must undo her wrongs. It is wrong for her to transfer the responsibility for solving the Indian problem to Indians, a problem which has been her creation. Good feelings between India and

Britain can never come that way for India would be tempted to think that Britain's unwillingness to grapple with this difficulty is due to interested motives. Each country will have to do its share and the pronouncement of the Secretary of State is disappointing from this point of view.

To fulfil her obligations to the weaker powers of Europe and to do what she thought to be right Britain entered the war though in a regrettably belated fashion. In a much higher sense, Britain has a duty to discharge by India, a duty which is the greater because Britain has been ruling India for nearly two centuries.

National India feels that the Secretary of State is refusing to play the game when he talks of some new and as yet untried variety of democracy for India. If the type of democracy now in evidence in the West is unworkable, why did not Britain and the United States scrap it long ago? It is contended that in those countries there are not parties with conflicting ideologies which disapprove of the system and if so have the opinions of these minorities been regarded as weighty enough to condemn the political system under which these countries have flourished and prospered? If not, why should the refusal of certain Indian minorities to accept the Western type of democracy be regarded as sufficient justification for an examination of the whole problem which is bound to take time and to exacerbate feelings still further.

It seems to me that there is only one course open to Britain and that is to acknowledge the mistake she made when she imposed the *Communal Award on India* to give us the same variety of democracy under which Britain lives and then to face the consequences whatever they may be with the same serenity and unruffled courage with which she is facing totalitarianism at so many fronts today. This is the only way to win over India and convince the rest of the world that Britain is sincere in her professions of democracy.

The real reason why India demands self-government a demand voiced in 1906 by only one political party and today by every large All India organization, was well put by Mahatma Gandhi when Lord Lothian asked our great leader as to what he regarded as the greatest disservice done by Britain to India. According to the New

*York Times* of April 2, 1937, Mahatmaji is reported to have said, 'You English committed one supreme crime against my people. For a hundred years you have done everything for us, you have given us no responsibility for our own Government, nor enabled us to learn by making mistakes. If we are deficient in the character and experience necessary to enable us to take over the control of our own affairs, it is because you have never given us the opportunity to develop those qualities in practice. We demand responsibility at once.'

If the British Government feels that democracy in actual operation in India may, in some cases, mean the tyranny of the majority over the minority, it should also remember that it is the price India will have to pay for her lack of experience and that her statesmen, like the statesmen of other countries, will have to learn by making mistakes. No constitution human ingenuity can create is fool-proof. In every case, conventions will have to be established and methods of procedure devised and the constitution will work satisfactorily to the extent that these are contrived wisely and with a single eye to its successful operation. India, too, will have to pass through this experience and she can do so only when democracy of the Western type is granted to her. The experience India's statesmen will gather will enable India to introduce such modifications as may be found necessary to suit Indian conditions, but this must come necessarily at a later stage. On the other hand, to wait till there is absolute unanimity among the various conflicting groups and after that to frame a constitution which finds universal acceptance is to ask us to wait, perhaps indefinitely.

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THE HON MR P 'N SAPRU, in a statement on Mr Amery's speech, said as follows —

Mr Amery came to the India Office with a certificate from that genuine friend of India, *The Manchester Guardian*, as being the most liberal of the Tories. John Gunther, in his 'Inside Europe' had described him, however, as an extreme Rightist, extremely narrow in dealing with Imperial questions. Who that has read Mr Amery's speeches and declarations can deny that John Gunther was right and that *The Manchester Guardian* was wrong?



The line adopted by Mr Amery is in direct opposition to that which commended itself, and in my opinion rightly to the organisers of the Bombay Conference. What in effect Mr Amery says is that there will be no advance at the Centre on the lines recommended by the Bombay Conference unless the dictator of the Muslim League gives his approval to such an advance. In other words, India's destiny is to be decided by the intransigent leader of an organisation which stands for the partition of India and which had been putting forward demands which no reasonable man can regard as just and fair.

The British Government has suddenly discovered a great love for agreement. What may one well ask is this 'Has this government which is talking of agreement as a condition precedent to any advance done anything to promote that agreement?' Mr Amery is not prepared to say that even if the main political elements in the country came together he would completely Indianise the Executive Council on the lines suggested by the Bombay Conference. He is not prepared to say that India will be treated in inter Imperial matters as a Dominion. He is not prepared to say that India will be endowed with Dominion Status within a definite time-limit. He is not prepared to say that the important portfolios of Finance and Defence will be entrusted to Indians if they come to some sort of agreement during the interim period.

Moreover Mr Amery is not prepared to recognise the responsibility of His Majesty's Government for much of the communal trouble in this country. Who can then believe in the sincerity of Mr Amery's professions to lead India on to Dominion Status?

The broad fact that stares us in the face is that the British as represented by Mr Amery is unwilling to part with or even share power with India. It is clear that the British Cabinet, on behalf of which Mr Amery spoke is not for one reason or another at present inclined to support the reasonable elements in Indian politics. It is distressing to find that trusted friends of India like Mr Arthur Greenwood, Mr Attlee and Sir Archibald Sinclair are parties to the decisions of Mr Amery. It is refreshing however to find that the views put forward by Mr Amery did not meet with approval of all sections and that men like Mr Ammon, Mr W. Roberts and Sir Stanley Reek were really critical of Mr Amery.

'Mr Amery's talents should be utilised somewhere else and the India Office ought to be placed in charge of a man of broad and progressive outlook. We can expect nothing from Mr Amery. I am deeply grieved that the proposals of the Bombay Conference have not been accepted by the British Cabinet

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**S**ARDAR SANT SINGH, M.L.A. (Central) gave a press statement as follows —

Mr Amery has shown a deplorable lack of appreciation of the present political situation in India

The Secretary of State has misread the Bombay Conference resolution when he says that the same has been directed to the wrong address. The statement is not likely to encourage those who are anxious to help in the war effort

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**S**IR P. S. SIVASWAMI Aiyar expressed his views as follows :

The latest speech of Mr Amery in the House of Commons will not bring about any solution of the constitutional deadlock or any easing of the political and communal tension in this country

I agree with the statement issued by Mr V. N. Chandavarkar, President of the National Liberal Federation of India, on the speech. The resolutions of the Indian Leaders' Conference at Bombay should have been adopted as furnishing a temporary basis at least for the period of the war and the reconstruction of the Central Government on this basis would have helped to create confidence in the British Government and in their willingness to part with power. The argument that the transfer of power to an Executive Council composed of non-official Indians, however eminent, cannot solve the question as they have no support from the organised parties in the Legislature, has been pushed too far. Making full allowance for the likelihood of obstructionist tactics by the representatives of the majority parties, the adoption of the policy of the Bombay Conference cannot possibly lead to any disaster, as the power of the Governor-General to certify necessary measures is not to be affected. On the other hand, it is at

least as likely as not that the conduct of the administration by distinguished non-official Indians may commend itself to the reasonable elements in the country and win the support of public opinion, even though it may fail to secure the support of the majority in the Legislature. It cannot be said that there is no difference between this position and the conduct of the administration by the Government, as it is now constituted. The success of this experiment will lead to the adoption of a more reasonable policy by the party organisations. It is unfortunate that the parties in this country should be now under the thumb of leaders, more anxious about their own prestige than about the welfare of the country and the cursedness of visionaries who are the objects of a superstitious veneration.

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**MR. OSMAN SOBANI** ex president of the Anjuman-e Islam of Bombay issued the following statement —

I cannot understand the flutter created by the Secretary of State's speech. I for one am neither surprised nor disappointed. The proposal to thoroughly Indianise the Executive Council has been in the hands of the Viceroy since August 1940, and must have been communicated by him to Mr. Amery.

The Standing Committee of the Bombay Conference is to meet at Allahabad on the 27th of this month. I trust that this Committee will earnestly take up Mr. Amery's challenge and do their utmost to arrange a meeting between Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah and persuade the former to consider seriously the latter's proposals. This Committee must also appeal to the Indian Press to abstain from reciprocal acrimonious attacks against the Congress and the League. Nothing can be achieved by characterising the Muslim League's demands as a "poisonous gospel."

If Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Chimanlal, Sir Sultan Ahmed and Sir Homi Mody take upon themselves the difficult task of bringing about a rapprochement between Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah, Mr. Amery's rebuff to Sir T. B. Sapru may yet prove that "good cometh out of evil."

PANDIT HRIDAYA NATH KUNZRU, member of the standing Committee of the Bombay Conference, in an interview said

As for the unrepresentative character of the Bombay Conference, Mr Amery has failed to meet the charge that the very persons who are treated as representatives of India when the British Government claim that India is with them in the war effort are treated as unrepresentative when they ask for their national rights. As regards the communal differences, Mr Amery has again asked Indians to arrive at an amicable settlement when the Government have themselves done everything to render it impossible by practically giving the Muslims a veto over all constitutional advance. The communal problem will continue to be harped by the British Government as long as it suits them to do so. Mr Jinnah, in spite of the brave words used by him, has, in his address to the Muslim League session at Madras, virtually begged the British Government to regard his community as their friend and to extricate it from the difficult position in which it has placed itself by its impossible demands. Mr Amery, while not going as far as Mr Jinnah would have liked him to do, has tried to assure the Muslim community that he is not unsympathetic towards it.

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THE following resolution was passed by the Council of the Deccan Sabha

The Council of the Deccan Sabha is deeply disappointed at the recent statement made in the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for India, as it shows no disposition to find a solution of the present grave Indian problem. In particular, the curt rejection of the proposals of the recent Bombay Conference and the continued insistence on a preliminary understanding between the two major communities before any further step is taken, show a lamentable want of true statesmanship on the part of the authorities, especially when the present serious war situation demands that the fullest co-operation from all sections of the people of India should be secured by producing the necessary psychological atmosphere

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MR ARTHUR MOORE, Editor of *The Statesman* issued the following statement from England

Since my arrival in this country I have noticed some possibilities of Empire misunderstandings, to which the necessary reduction in the size of newspapers here may give rise. I have seen the transcript of the India debate telegraphed to India and it is much fuller than anything available here. The Indian public has read in detail what Sir George Schuster Sir Stanley Reed Mr W Roberts and others said. The British public remains unaware that Sir George Schuster himself a former Finance Member said "It is ridiculous to claim that there are no Indians capable of being Finance Members" or that Sir Stanley Reed said that Mr Amery's speech left him under a sense of depression and did not take us anywhere.

May I also confess disappointment and say I could pick several Indians who would make as good Defence Members as an average British War Secretary? The Nawab of Bhopal would be above the average

What was said of the futilities of the Congress and the difficulties created by the Moslem League is true. In the crisis of our late India's fate and the world's fate is it leadership to imitate these futilities by making agreement among Indians themselves—which we well know we shall not get—a condition precedent to our own action?

In peace-time we insisted on the overriding judgment and initiative of Parliament while Indian extremists declared that Indians only in a Constituent Assembly must devise an Indian constitution. In wartime, we thrust an equivalent of their own unworkable idea down their throats and the Secretary of State insists that "the responsibility both for the initiation and completion of this high inquiry rests with Indians themselves."

I am with reason, an admirer of Mr Amery and know the reality of his belief in Dominion Government but there is somewhere a paralysis of leadership, which does not befit the times.

THE HON KHAN BAHADUR ALLA DUA Premier of Sindh expressed his views as follows

"There is nothing new in Mr Amery's speech requiring consideration or thought by Indian politicians. Mr Amery is repeating

the old offer, which has been rejected by all political parties in India and reiterating his old arguments. The less we think about them the better for India,

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**R**AI BAHADUR GURU NARAIN, General Secretary of the All-India Hindu League, expressed his opinion as under

Where there is a will, there is a way I think that Britain does not want to part with power

There is nothing in Mr Amery's offer and the stalemate in the country, instead of being solved, would assume a more difficult aspect It is deplorable that India's gravest dangers are not being realised both by the Muslim League and the Congress at such a

## Echoes from the Press

CALCUTTA, April 23

UNDER the caption "India knows her Amery" the *Advance* in a leading article commenting on Mr Amery's speech in the Commons says "We are happy to note that Mr Amery is rigidly true to his type and does not contradict his past performances. What he said on August 8 1940 and called his firm offer he repeats, renews and reiterates on April 22 1941 with an undisturbed complacency as though the world has stood still since the August offer of his was made. The hands of the clock have been motionless for him and the offer dated the 8th day of August 1940, has consequently needed no modified edition."

The paper add "Mr Amery was all eagerness all pains, to impress on the minds of his parliamentary hearers the unhinged determination of Mr Jinnah's vow unto death for a Muslim India. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru too received the tribute of being "that distinguished ex public servant but was cut off with a shilling." The pounds have gone to the full-blooded reactionaries concluding the paper who, if necessary would cut Amery Amery

BOMBAY, April 24

THE *Bombay Chronicle* characterises Mr Amery's speech as a "challenge to Nationalists" Turning to the Bombay Leaders' Conference, the paper says "Some hoped that the proposals might be substantially accepted by the Government But Mr Amery turns them down unceremoniously and even ridicules them and their supporters" The paper adds "Mr. Amery seems more interested in counteracting the influence of the Congress than in bringing about a settlement with it."

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THE *Free Press Journal*, commenting on the India debate, writes "All the argumentation is for clever handling of the Indian situation—for more cunning diplomacy, for more calculating generosity. There was not a whisper of Britain's tremendous moral responsibility in respect of the 500 millions of coloured subjects over whom she rules"

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CALCUTTA, April 23

THE *Statesman* says "It is a matter for regret that no new melody is to be heard Mr Amery emphasised the opportunity offered to Indians of framing the country's future constitution, which is a recognition in advance of India's status as a Dominion That is what Indians wanted, that is, we believe, what most Indians want But an attendant stipulation has brought frustration The new constitution must be the outcome of agreement among the principal elements in India's national life That is where the programme has broken down, capacity for agreement has for many reasons been small and the more rigidly one element sets out its view, the more rigid the others become in feeling and thought"

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THE *Amrita Bazar Patrika* says "There is no change in Mr Amery's attitude There is no change in his tone either The old prejudiced mind is actively at work There is no spirit of helpfulness on his part in the grim months through which we are all passing There is no basis of settlement in his speech"



The paper adds, "Indeed His Majesty's Ministers are not prepared to part with power. They speak the language of democracy, they continue to think and act in terms of the traditions of the ruling caucus. Mr Churchill is a Tory diehard. Mr Amery is a good lieutenant. The diehards are in the saddle. Democracy and freedom are opposed to the traditions which they understand and labour to maintain and uphold."

"If there is anything notable in the speech it is a more pronounced bias against the Congress" says the *Hindustan Standard*. "The Muslim League obviously has received more sympathetic consideration than the Congress."

The paper adds "It is extremely to be regretted that while there is a lot of beating about the bush in Mr Amery's speech, there is not the slightest recognition of the fundamental fact, that the solution can come only in the Congress way that is to say through a Constituent Assembly and on the basis of Independence of a United India"

NEW DELHI April 23

UNDER the caption "Maligning the Congress" the *Hindustan Times* commenting on the Commons debate says that it is "not likely to contribute anything towards improving the situation in this country. It may even have the contrary effect of worsening the relations between the Government and the people. Where Mr Amery's speech does not disappoint it is likely to exasperate all sections of opinion in the country. His anti-Congress animus is likely to be reciprocated by the Congress by a further stiffening of its attitude. The indirect encouragement he gave to the Muslim League in making its impossible demand will induce it to persist in its intransigence. His rejection of the well-meant proposals of the Bombay Conference will disappoint the Liberal section of opinion in the country. And the manner in which he finds fault with all sections while himself contributing nothing more to the solution of the Indian problem except the wholly inadequate and insufficient offer of August last and a few well-chosen phrases will create disgust in the minds of ordinary men."

LUCKNOW, April 23

WRITING editorially under the caption "Ipsissima Verba" the *National Herald* expresses the opinion that Mr Amery's speech makes an unabashed attempt at a misrepresentation of the Congress as a Nazi-like organization and shows supreme contempt for those non-Congress elements who have been trying to play the role of honest broker between Britain and India. The journal believes that Congressmen should find ample justification in the speech for their cardinal belief that the British Government have not the slightest desire to part with power now or hereafter. The tarring brush of suspicion is applied to all alike.

The paper adds that Mr Jinnah "gets a pat on his back for his Madras oration, but if even he cannot be trusted, it is entirely his misfortune". It also finds reason to suspect that Mr Amery's interpretation of the August offer is becoming narrower with the greater confidence he is gaining in the existing regime.

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"IF Congress is to be criticised for its 'all or nothing' cry, what shall we say of Whitehall's 'little or nothing'? It has committed a blunder of the first magnitude, the effects of which it is impossible to foresee", writes the *Pioneer* in a leading article under the caption "Amery Blunders".

The paper adds "Plausible, but psychologically unsustainable. Such must be the general verdict on Mr Amery's attitude towards the political impasse in India, as revealed in the two speeches he made in the House of Commons".

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LAHORE, April 23

THE immediate and most important effect of Mr Amery's speech was to destroy whatever hopes of a solution of the present political impasse in India the Bombay Conference and the resolution passed by it had roused, whether in this country or in Britain," says the *Tribune*, in a leading article entitled "Mr Amery's Damper". It says that Mr Amery's rejection of the Bombay Conference's proposal was categorical and final.

Proceeding the paper says that "the rejection of the Bombay Conference proposal means and can mean nothing else except the indefinite continuance of the present impasse, with all its harmful effects both on the general and the war situation in India. If that is what Mr Amery desires he is welcome to his decision; if not, he must find some way of re-opening the door he has for the moment so effectively banged."

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IN a leading article on the India debate the *Times* (London) referring to the resignation of the Congress Government, says

The demand for resignation was not made by a discontented electorate or by the Governors nor was the resignations of the Ministers caused by disagreements on policy within the Congress Party. The summons reached them from the executive of that party which wished thus to express disapproval in Mr Amery's words "of the absence of a statement of war aims by the British Government framed to its liking."

The disregard displayed by the most powerful Indian party for responsibilities of Self-government was serious enough. Still more serious has been its effect on other important elements in Indian political life. It has filled the Muslims, the Princes and non-Congress Governments and electorates of India with the utmost distrust of the Congress policy and methods.

It has inspired Mr Jinnah and the Muslim League to demand separation of India into two separate nations—a remedy which seems more dangerous even than the disease of party totalitarianism—to quote the Secretary of State—with which the Congress Party is afflicted.

Since the rejection by the Congress Party of all British attempts at a reasonable solution a number of eminent Indians led by the veteran statesman Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru have put forward fresh proposals.

These were reviewed and criticised by the Secretary of State and the House while obviously regretting his inability to accept them but to agree that their acceptance in their present form was not practical.

politics Mr. Amery appealed to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and his followers to concentrate their efforts on bringing the contending Indian parties together

It is certain that no scheme imposed by the British Government upon India however carefully planned, can hope for a fraction of the success which would be reached through agreement, and the whole tone of the debate, the speech of the Secretary of State himself and those of members of all parties showed that the Government and Parliament alike are only too anxious that British India should enjoy dominion status at the first practicable opportunity

Mr. Amery paid a well-deserved tribute to the conduct of the Indian army and navy and to the increasing contribution of the Indian Empire to the war. Non-political India is doing its duty nobly to the cause of freedom. It is surely time for the Indian political leaders, even if they will not listen to British counsels, to pay some attention to those of their fellow countrymen who look beyond party and sectarian advantages and wish to see India play her full part in the struggle which her traditions and her resources demand. Little as they may care to admit it, the war is drawing nearer to their borders and stern demands of coming days cannot be met by persistence in outworn policies or by manoeuvres for minor tactical advantages.

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THE India debate on Tuesday was unsatisfactory so far as it disclosed Government's policy", says the *Manchester Guardian* in a leading article dated April 26, 1941. The debate was only satisfactory because some of the speeches by private members showed that there is a lively discontent with Government having no policy now for doing anything.

Mr Wilfred Roberts said, the paper adds, that Mr Amery's speech left "a sense of frustration and disappointment". Sir Stanley Reed, a first-rate authority on India said that the speech left "a sense of depression". It travelled "over the old ground". The *Manchester Guardian* asks "What have Government done to show that they do not deserve to be accused of drifting since the Viceroy made the August proposals. It has been suggested that a delegation of members of Parliament should go to India with Government approval to try and bring together the Muslim League and the Congress. Have Government ever helped that

plan? It has been continually proposed in public and in private that Mr Amery himself a man of goodwill should go. This was again proposed in Tuesday's debate. Mr Amery does not go. Sir George Schuster in a wise speech, suggested that provincial ministers and De wans of the States "should get together" The paper says that a similar idea has been strongly supported in India and asks "Have Government ever given it any help?"

"Of course," says the paper "it is possible for the hundredth time to criticise the Congress and the Muslim League to show how unreasonable they are, how much they think of themselves how little of India. What then? The two parties face each other the League demanding independent Muslim States and the Congress the extreme rights of a majority while thousands of Congress representatives choose to go to prison. Of course it is a terrible problem but is it a part worthy of our people to sit down with folded hands and tell others to take on the job of producing an ordered future for India?"

"Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's Bombay Conference led to a plan under which the Viceroy's Council would become the Indian Government but would remain responsible to the Crown. It could be a provisional plan not anticipating the new Constitution with Dominion Status which must follow the war. Mr Amery finds all sorts of difficulties but there will always be difficulties. They have to be overcome and risks have to be faced."

"Cannot Government think again" asks the *Manchester Guardian* "We do not have India behind us as we ought to have and only by Government trying again and again risking failure never despairing always seeking control of the events never drifting shall we succeed"



the major parties was a desirable pre requisite to their joint collaboration at the Centre. Such agreement was unfortunately not reached and in the circumstances no progress was then possible.

During the earlier part of this year I continued my efforts to bring political parties together. In these last few weeks I again entered into conversations with prominent political personages in British India and the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, the results of which have been reported to His Majesty's Government. His Majesty's Government have seen also the resolutions passed by the Congress Working Committee the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha.

It is clear that the earlier differences which had prevented the achievement of national unity remain unbridged. Deeply as His Majesty's Government regret this they do not feel that they should any longer because of these differences, postpone the expansion of the Governor-General's Council and the establishment of a body which will more closely associate Indian public opinion with the conduct of the war by the Central Government.

They have authorised me accordingly to invite a certain number of representative Indians to join my Executive Council.

They have authorised me further to establish a War Advisory Council which would meet at regular intervals, and which would contain representatives of the Indian States and of other interests in the national life of India as a whole.

The conversations which have taken place and the resolutions of the bodies which I have just mentioned make it clear however that there is still in certain quarters doubt as to the intentions of His Majesty's Government for the constitutional future of India and that there is doubt too, as to whether the position of Minorities, whether political or religious is sufficiently safeguarded in relation to any constitutional change by the assurance already given. There are two main points which have emerged. On those two points His Majesty's Government now desire me to make their position clear.

The first is as to the position of Minorities in relation to any future constitutional scheme. It has already been made clear that my declaration of last October does not exclude consideration of any part either of the Act of 1915 or of the policy and principles which

it is based His Majesty's Government's concern that full weight should be given to the views of the Minorities in any revision has also been brought out. That remains the position of His Majesty's Government

It goes without saying that they could not contemplate the transfer of the present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of Government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a Government

*The second point of general interest is the machinery for building within the British Commonwealth of Nations a new constitutional scheme when the times comes* There has been very strong insistence that the framing of that scheme should be primarily the responsibility of Indians themselves, and should originate from Indian conceptions of the social, economic and political structure of Indian life

His Majesty's Government are in sympathy with that desire, and wish to see it given the fullest practical expression subject to the due fulfilment of the obligations which Great Britain's long connection with India has imposed upon her and for which His Majesty's Government cannot divest themselves of responsibility

It is clear that a moment when the Commonwealth is engaged in a struggle for existence is not one in which fundamental constitution issues can be decisively resolved But His Majesty's Government authorise me to declare that they will most readily assent to the setting up after the conclusion of the war with the least possible delay of a body representative of the principal elements in India's national life in order to devise the framework of the new constitution and they will lend every aid in their power to hasten decisions on all relevant matters to the utmost degree

Meanwhile they will welcome and promote in any way possible every sincere and practical step that may be taken by representative Indians themselves to reach a basis of friendly agreement

Firstly, on the form which the post-war representative body should take and the methods by which it should arrive at its conclusions, and secondly, upon the principles and outlines of the constitution itself



They trust however that for the period of the war (with the Central Government reconstituted and strengthened in the manner I have described and with the help of the War Advisory Council all parties, communities and interests will combine and cooperate in making a notable Indian contribution to the victory of the world cause which is at stake. Moreover, they hope that in this process new bonds of union and understanding will emerge and thus pave the way towards the attainment by India of that free and equal partnership in the British Commonwealth which remains the proclaimed and accepted goal of the Imperial Crown and of the British Parliament.

## APPENDIX II

*POONA RATIFICATION*

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*CONGRESS RESOLUTION ON VICEROY'S OFFER*

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## The Poona Ratification

THE Working Committee, meeting in Delhi passed the following resolution on July 7, 1940 which was confirmed and passed by the All India Congress Committee at the sessions held in Poona on July 27-28, 1940

"The Working Committee have noted the serious happenings which have called forth fresh appeals to bring about a solution of the dead-lock in the Indian political situation and in view of the desirability of clarifying the Congress position they have earnestly examined the whole situation once again in the light of the latest developments in world affairs

The Working Committee are more than ever convinced that the acknowledgement by Great Britain of the complete Independence of India is the only solution of the problems facing both India and Britain and are, therefore, of opinion that such an unequivocal declaration should be immediately made and that as an immediate step in giving effect to it, a provisional National Government should be constituted at the Centre which though formed as a temporary measure, should be such as to command the con-

raise the unsolved constitutional issue and prejudice it in favour of the majority and against the minorities. The Working Committee are of the opinion that the rejection of this proposal unmistakably indicates that there is no willingness on the part of the British Government to part with any power and authority even for the immediate purpose of securing co-operation in the war efforts. The British Government would gather together and carry on with such dissentient groups and individuals as oppose the wishes of the majority of the people of India and without any co-ordination with the elected Legislatures at the Centre or in the Provinces, rather than concede anything that would work towards recognition of the rights of the people of India to rule themselves democratically.

For these reasons, the Working Committee have come to the conclusion that the statements referred to are wholly opposed not only to the principle of democracy as acclaimed by the British Government in their War Aims, but also to the best interests of India and they cannot be a party to accepting the proposals contained in the statement or advising the country to accept them. The Working Committee consider that these declarations and offers not only fall far short of the Congress demand but would be impediments to the evolution of a free and united India.

The Working Committee call upon the people to condemn the attitude adopted by the British Government by means of public meetings and otherwise, as also through their elected representatives in the Provincial Legislatures.

APPENDIX III

*MUSLIM LEAGUE RESOLUTION*

# **R U B Y**

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**Workmen's Compensation Business**

## Muslim League Resolution

THE Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League, which met at Bombay on September 2, 1941 passed a resolution touching the Viceroy's offer and Mr Amery's speech in the House of Commons

The Committee consider that these pronouncements constitute a considerable progressive advance towards the approach of the point of view and the position taken up by the All-India Muslim League on behalf of Muslim India, regarding the problem of the future Constitution of India, and the Committee also note with satisfaction that His Majesty's Government have, on the whole, practically met the demand of the Muslim League for a clear assurance to the effect that no future Constitution, interim or final, should be adopted by the British Government without their approval and consent

Another resolution asserted that certain observations contained in these pronouncements regarding "the unity of national life in India, which does not exist, are historically inaccurate and self-contradictory". The resolution further reiterated the Muslim League's faith in the Pakistan scheme adopted by the Lahore session of the Muslim League.



Such observations are calculated to raise apprehensions in the minds of the Muslims of India, and, therefore, the Committee deem it necessary to reaffirm and make the position clear once more that the Committee stands by the Lahore resolution and the basic principles underlying the terms thereof proposing the division of India, and the creation of independent States in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India where the Muslims are in a majority

The Committee declare their determination firm resolve, and faith that the partition of India is the only solution of the most difficult and complex problem of India's future Constitution and are glad to state that the vital importance and the true aspect of this question are being fully realised by the British Parliament and that His Majesty's Government are now fully apprised and seized of the realities of the situation.

The Muslim League again makes its position clear that the Muslims of India are a nation by themselves and will exercise their right to self-determination, and that they alone are the final judges and arbiters of their own future destiny

The Committee, while expressing appreciation of Government's action in "conceding the principle urged upon them by the Muslim League" described the specific offer of the Viceroy as "unsatisfactory" and requested the Viceroy to reconsider the matter. It authorised the President, Mr Jinnah, to seek further information and clarification regarding the strength and functions, not only of the proposed War Advisory Committee but of the Expanded Executive Council. It further sought to be informed as to "what portfolios will be assigned to every one of these additional members."

The Committee concluded its three day session after passing a resolution permitting "such Moslems as think they can serve any useful purpose by merely associating themselves with War Committees to do so."

APPENDIX IV  
*HINDU MAHASABHA RESOLUTION*

## Hindu Mahasabha Resolution

11. VIII

THE following resolutions were passed by the Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha which met in Bombay on September 22, 1940 — "In view of the opportunities that the present war offers for the general militarisation of the Hindus and for the organization of the defence of India on sound up-to-date modern lines, so that India may be converted into a self-contained defence unit, the Hindu Mahasabha is prepared wholeheartedly to work out the schemes of the extension of the Viceroy's Executive Council and the War Advisory Council but on honourable terms of equity and justice as stated below: "In view of the declaration made by the Muslim League of its determination, firm resolve and faith that the partition of India is the only solution of a future constitution for India the Hindu Mahasabha urges upon the Viceroy to make a clear and definite declaration that Government have not approved or accepted any such proposal or scheme.

"That in view of the reported understanding between the Viceroy and the Muslim League that the League would be given two seats on the proposed extended Executive Council and five seats on the pro-

posed War Advisory Council, the Mahasabha claims a representation of six seats in the extended Executive Council and 15 seats on the War Advisory Council on the population basis

“That out of the six seats on the extended Executive Council, one be given to Sikhs and one to Scheduled Castes and the rest to be given to the nominees of the Mahasabha ”

“The Working Committee considers the demand of the Muslim League for 50 per cent representation on the proposed Executive Council and elsewhere as undemocratic, unconstitutional, unreasonable and preposterous, and urges upon the Viceroy to give an assurance to the Mahasabha that no such demand would be entertained ”

“In view of the attitude taken up by the Muslim League and the altered political situation brought about thereby, the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha requests the President, without meaning any disagreement about the personnel of the panel, to withdraw the panel which was submitted by him to the Viceroy on behalf of the Mahasabha, in deference to the wishes of the Viceroy.

“The Working Committee also urges that a sub-committee of the extended Executive Council be formed, with the Viceroy as President, to be in charge of the defence portfolio and that Hindus should be given adequate representation on it

“The meeting urges that the Viceroy should not commit himself to any distribution of portfolios before the extended Executive Council is constituted The Committee further urges that the distribution of portfolios when made should be on an equitable basis with due regard to the importance and interests of the Hindus ”

## APPENDIX V

### *BOMBAY CONFERENCE RESOLUTION*

## Bombay Conference Resolution

THE following is the text of the resolution adopted unanimously at the Bombay Conference of Non-party leaders on March 15, 1941

While India dislikes the idea of taking advantage of Britain's difficulties in her heroic struggle, the Conference is equally desirous that India's domestic problems should not be pressed to her disadvantage

As a first step towards ending the present deadlock, and until a permanent constitution is brought into force, the Conference desires to emphasise the immediate need for the reconstruction of the Governor-General's Executive Council

The Conference considers that the present Council, which consists of three European members from the Indian Civil Service and three Indians, of whom two are non-officials and one is a member of the Indian Civil Service, in addition to H E the Viceroy and H E the Commander-in-Chief, is neither adequate nor sufficiently representative to organise and direct India's war effort at this moment of grave peril

The Conference is anxious that India's defences should be put on a firm basis and that the resources of this great country, in men and

material, should be used to the fullest advantage not only to defend her own frontiers but to help the British people to the fullest extent possible, consistently with the best interests of India.

For the reasons mentioned above this Conference is of the opinion that the whole Executive Council should consist of non-official Indians drawn from important elements in the public life of the country. This would naturally involve the transfer of all portfolios, including the vital ones of Finance and Defence to Indians, while the Conference is willing during the period of the war, that the reconstructed Centre may remain responsible to the Crown and so far as Defence is concerned, the position of the Commander-in-Chief as the executive head of the Defence forces of the country, may not be, in any way prejudiced.

At the same time, the Conference is strongly of the view that the reconstructed Government should not merely be a collection of departmental heads, but should deal with all important matters of policy on a basis of joint and collective responsibility. In regard to all inter Imperial and international matters, the reconstructed Government should be treated on the same footing as the Dominion Governments.

The Conference is further of the opinion that to create a favourable atmosphere for the working of the reconstructed Central Government it is necessary to remove the doubts and misgivings of the people of this country as regards the genuineness of the intentions of His Majesty's Government by making a declaration simultaneously with the reconstruction of the Central Government that within a specified time limit, after the conclusion of the war India will enjoy the same measure of freedom as will be enjoyed by Britain and the Dominions.

The Conference authorizes its president the Rt. Hon. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to communicate the terms of the resolution to H. E. the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India and to take such other steps as may be necessary to achieve its objects.

APPENDIX VI  
TRUCULENT JINNAH  
&  
TRANQUIL SAPRU



## Truculent Mr Jinnah

FROM Nandi Hills on May 5 the following statement was issued by Mr M. A. Jinnah.

As regards the personal statement of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru first let me deal with the genesis of the Conference. I have ample information to repeat that it was engineered by the agents of the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha leaders although well-known and prominent Congress leaders remained in the background and that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru consciously or unconsciously has allowed his name to be associated with this move. It was an obvious manoeuvre and contrivance designed by a small coterie of men who were anxious to stage it expressly before the India debate which was announced to take place in Parliament after the Easter recess.

On Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's own showing the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha were behind it but immediately after the Conference was over it was authoritatively stated at the meeting of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha that the Hindu Mahasabha was not officially connected with the Bombay Conference and that the Hindu

Mahasabha was free to take its own decision on any settlement that may arise out of these negotiations. The very nature and character of the proposals put forward by this Conference clearly indicate that they were designed to meet the demands of Gandhiji, Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha, in total disregard of the position of the Muslim League.

In fact it met the Congress Poona demand for 'National Government' in effect at the centre and its acceptance by the British Government would have automatically torpedoed the Muslim League demand of Pakistan. Therefore the objective of this Conference was and its resolutions were intended to make the way smooth for the Congress and to enable Gandhiji to give up Satyagraha and return to normal politics with credit, substantial gain and victory over all others.

Further the meeting of the Conference and its resolutions and its proposals synchronised with a bold lead given by the *Hindu* of Madras—an out and out Congress paper—urging upon Gandhiji to give up Satyagraha. The Conference and its resolutions were received with the deepest sympathies by the Congress Press generally.

Ordinarily such a conference of self-appointed delegates would have been at once dubbed as nonentities and men who represented nobody.

After the resolution was passed the *Hindu* gave the best certificate to Sir Tej Bahadur in the following terms.

'These proposals not only constituted a considerable approximation to the Congress demand, but they represent a very substantial agreement amongst all the progressive elements of the country'

Of course Muslim India of 100 millions, the Scheduled Castes of 60 millions and millions of non-Brahmins of Southern India do not count or matter and as regards the Indian States they do not even exist. All that was aimed at was how best to satisfy Gandhiji and the Congress. The origin and the paternity of Sapru's proposals can easily be traced to the author of the Delhi-cum-Poona Congress demand for 'National Government'. Mr. Rajagopalachari who carried the day at the cost of Gandhiji being thrown overboard not only received permission and advice of Gandhiji that the Poona resolution should be enforced, but curiously Gandhiji went further and actually recom-

intended and advised the Muslim League and even the Princes to welcome it and support it wholeheartedly notwithstanding his implicit faith in his creed of non-violence he proceeded to advise the British Government in the following terms:

'I advise as a disinterested but staunch friend that the British Government should not reject the hand of friendship offered by the Congress. Is this consistent with Ahimsa and truth?

Recently at a public meeting at Trichinopoly which as reported in the Press was held on April 19 the leader of non-Brahmins Justice Party Mr Ramaswami Naicker stated that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru had no intention of ever convening the Conference to end the deadlock but that it was at the instance of Mr K. Srinivasan, Managing Editor of the *Hindu* who in turn was pressed by Mr Rajagopalachari to prevail on Sir Tej to convene a meeting and pass a resolution which was to all intents and purposes drafted by Mr Rajagopalachari.

I wish Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru had followed the sound advice of Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and not allowed his name and reputation to be exploited by those who were behind the move.

Evidently Sir Tej Bahadur is still living in the atmosphere of the Round Table Conference. He does not realise that since then much water has run down the Jumna and when he appeals to the British Government to take the initiative and impose a constitution upon India he is at least a decade behind.

On the other hand he himself says during the Round Table Conference discussions, when Mr Ramsay Macdonald consulted me about the communal award, I told him point blank that if I were the British Prime Minister I should not undertake the responsibility and yet notwithstanding the fact that there was no agreement between the Hindus and the Muslims Mr Ramsay Macdonald's Government which consisted also of Conservatives went on with their scheme, gave first the Communal Award and then introduced the India Bill

What has happened to Sir Tej Bahadur to deviate from the wise and statesmanlike advice which he gave to Mr Ramsay Macdonald the then Prime Minister? He now desires that the British Government should force or impose a constitution interim or final although there may be no agreement between the Hindus and Mus-

lms? In fact Sir Tej Bahadur should be the first to appreciate that the Muslim League has succeeded in persuading the British Government by means of their representations and correspondence that the whole constitutional field should be re-examined and that no change in the adoption of any final constitutional scheme should be decided upon by the British Government without the approval and consent of Muslim India. That was precisely the statesmanlike advice which Sir Tej Bahadur tendered to the then British Prime Minister when he unfortunately failed. What is the use of Sir Tej Bahadur asking the British Government to go back upon their solemn pledge given by their declaration of policy dated August 8 which would be considered by Muslim India as a gross breach of faith with them?

What is the use of appealing to the British Government to impose any interim or final constitution contrary not only to the wishes of Muslim India and other powerful minorities and the Indian States but in the teeth of their opposition?

To say that the Indian problem as it exists today will defy any solution if solution depends on Indian efforts is to argue ourselves out of court with our claim for freedom and independence. If we cannot agree upon a scheme of constitution how on earth are we going to manage together or run any kind of sovereign or Independent Government?

Mr Amery has made it quite clear by his speech of April 22, as to what was the essence of the August declaration of His Majesty's Government. To put it in his own words 'It was that the framework of India's future constitution should be devised by Indians themselves and not by this House. That was a far-reaching and indeed, revolutionary announcement, the full importance of which has not I think even yet been fully appreciated either in this country or in India.'

Then he says further, 'even more important in this connection is the stipulation that the constitution itself, and also the body which is to frame it must be the outcome of an agreement between the principal elements in India's national life. That is an essential prerequisite to the success of the future constitution. For if Indians cannot agree upon the kind of constitution they are prepared to

work, how are they likely to agree upon the actual working of it? He adds later, I have dwelt deliberately upon Indian responsibility in the matter for unless Indians are prepared to face that responsibility now they will fail to face it hereafter. Any agreement imposed by us from without cannot survive the withdrawal of our power to enforce it. Only a real agreement freely reached can stand that test.

Honourable Member Mr Godfrey Nicholson in the course of the debate said, "The venue has left Westminster and is now in India. This was the advice of Sir Tej Bahadur tendered to the British Government ten years ago. Only he failed.

But now this is described repeatedly *ad nauseum* that it gives a veto to Mr Jinnah and the Muslims and it is said that practically the present position of the Secretary of State for India is that until it pleases Mr Jinnah His Majesty's Government can do nothing to give effect to their own intentions.

Surely this was fully explained by Mr Amery as far back as the 14th of August when he amplified the declaration of August 8. He said Agreement, consent is indeed the foundation of all free Government, of all true Democracy. Decision by majority is not so much of the essence of democracy as a practical convenience which presupposes for its proper working an antecedent general consent to the constitution itself.

It has indeed in most Federal Constitutions been limited in various ways in order to safeguard the separate interests of the federating elements.

To describe the need for such agreement as a veto on constitutional progress is, I think, to do an injustice to the patriotism and sense of responsibility of those concerned. Agreement means not veto by any element but compromise and willingness to compromise in India as elsewhere is an essential test of the sense of responsibility on which free Government must be based.

Further it is recognised that Muslim India are a separate constituent factor in any future Indian policy entitled to be treated as such in any discussion for the shaping of India's future constitution.

and they as other elements are not to be regarded as mere numerical minorities

Let me here quote the words of a well-known British writer Patrick Lacy 'If they say we cannot agree ourselves on terms for our advance, hand in hand to freedom under a single responsible Government, let the Hindu nation and the Muslim nation go ahead as well as they can separately'

Don't hold us back together just because we quarrel Let us say we will rather have two free Indian Dominions each as nearly homogeneous as it can be than one more enormous cockpit of feuds under the ignominy of alien rule.

I would like Mr Amery also to ponder over this and not talk so much of the immense difficulties No constitutional scheme for India will be free from difficulties The question is which scheme is fraught with the least amount of difficulties I am afraid his reference to the Balkan States and his reference to Indian History in the 18th century is totally irrevelent He had better study the History of Ireland which is nearer at home

Now with regard to the statement issued by the so-called Standing Committee, composed of Mr Aney, Sardar Sant Singh, Mr Shiva Rao who is supposed to be the Joint Secretary and last but not the least Sir Jagdish Prasad, the Secretary, it is a crooked and tortuous statement and in certain parts perversion of truth It indulges in attacks alround mainly on the Muslim League and myself. The whole burden of the song in the statement is directed against me as Charles's head.

They complain that the British Government have gone back on their declared policy without having understood the declaration of the 8th of August and they have indulged in complete misrepresentation of the Muslim League and say that it does not represent Muslim India, which is untrue to their knowledge

It is a worthless document intended purely for the purpose of propaganda to mislead the ignorant and credulous people of India and abroad I would not have taken notice of it if the name of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru were not associated with it

## Tranquil Sapru

FROM Allahabad on May 6 Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru issued the following reply to the statement of Mr Jinnah

I have read Mr Jinnah's statement in this morning's papers which he has issued from Bangalore. It is clear he is angry and worried. He is angry because some people have crossed his path and challenged his supremacy. He is worried because the Bombay Resolution has attracted so much notice in the House of Commons.

Even though Mr Amery has not at present agreed to accept the suggestions of the Bombay Conference the fear cannot apparently be excluded from Mr Jinnah's mind that something may yet be done on its lines because Sir George Schuster's later speech shows that the change in the feeling of the English people towards India has not been put across.

Mr Jinnah finds himself at bay and that must account for the intemperate and at places vitriolic language which he has used in denouncing the Bombay Conference.

I have nothing to do with his quarrels with the Congress or the Hindu Mahasabha. They have been dealing with him so far and will probably know how to deal with him if they should consider it necessary. Meanwhile I can only answer for myself in relation to the Bombay Conference.

He suspects a conspiracy and has thought fit to take shelter behind a gentleman of Madras whose speech he refers to. In the course of that speech the Madras gentleman is reported to have said that the Bombay Resolution was to all intents and purposes drafted by Mr Rajagopalachari and Mr Jinnah found his charge on that speech. It is not particularly brave to make a statement against a person who is in jail and who cannot reply to you.

Mr K. Srinivasan, Mr B. Shiva Rao and Sir Jagdish Prasad against whom insinuations are made may possibly answer them. Meanwhile I can say that the resolution as laid before the Conference, was drafted by Sir Jagdish Prasad revised by a Committee appointed by the Conference and finally approved by me. What other

information is available to Mr Jinnah on which his suspicions are founded I do not know but it is a most unbecoming conduct on the part of a public man—more so in the case of the leader of an organization—to rely upon rumours and on the basis of those rumours to characterise the statement of the Standing Committee as 'crooked and tortuous and in certain parts perversion of truth'

He has tried to cover up the weakness of his position by the bitterness of his phraseology but it is not difficult to see that his mind is excited, his pride is wounded and he is suffering from a dearth of rational arguments. He says that on my own showing the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha were behind the Conference though he has actually laid more emphasis on the part which the Congress is supposed to have played in this alleged conspiracy.

When and where have I have shown that the Hindu Mahasabha was behind it? Mr Savarkar was there and I think the very first thing he said was that he was there in his individual capacity. Indeed all the members were there in their individual capacities. They sailed under no false colours, but are individuals meeting on a non-party platform to be prevented from expressing their individual opinions?

We trusted and still trust that Mr Savarkar who is probably more influential than the gentleman connected with the Hindu Sabha whom Mr Amery has quoted, will use his influence with the Hindu Sabha in accepting the spirit of the Resolution which dealt with only an interim arrangement in a non-communal spirit and not with a permanent constitution. To say that on my own showing the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha were behind the Conference is to use Mr Jinnah's own language, 'a perversion of truth'.

Similarly Mr Jinnah asks me as to what has happened to me if I am now deviating from the 'wise and statesmanlike advice' which I gave to Mr Ramsay MacDonald over the question of the Communal Award. It is strange that an acute mind like Mr Jinnah's did not see the point of my reference to this incident. The point was that the British Government did not at the time of the Round Table Conference make the settlement between the Hindus and the Muslims an absolute pre-requisite for the introduction of changes in the Constitution.



Why should Mr Amery make it now? Is there at present any reasonable chance of any advice being listened to by Mr Jinnah and those who think with him when he holds that neither an interim nor a permanent constitution should be arrived at unless all others subscribe to his new fangled theory of two nations in India and what seems to him to be its logical corollary the Pakistan

Mr Jinnah must be hard put to it if he can quote no better authority than Mr Patrik Lacey whom he describes as 'a well-known British writer probably for the consumption of the ignorant many but who was on the staff of an Anglo-Indian newspaper until a few years ago and not particularly known for the breadth of his views.

Now as to the genesis of the idea of a National Government at the Centre which the Bombay Resolution embodies I shall give a few dates —

(1) In May 1940 i.e. just a year ago I wrote a long article in the *Statesman* in which I advocated the idea of a National Government and asked for a moratorium of petty jealousies and dissensions during the war. This was warmly endorsed by the *Statesman*. I was at that time in Kashmir and I was not in touch with any Congressman or any Hindu Sabha man there.

(2) The Congress met at Delhi and passed its resolution on July 7 1940.

(3) The Poona Resolution was adopted on July 28, 1940, and it was supposed to demand — I have always maintained that it was vague on this point— a National Government responsible to the Legislature even during the period of the war a view which I have never accepted.

(4) Mahatma Gandhi unfolded his plan of campaign on October 15, 1940

(5) The first act of Satyagraha took place on October 17 1940, and I have publicly criticised it.

(6) On December 15 1940, I issued a statement in which I definitely said that all the Ministers of the extended or reconstructed Councils should be responsible to the Crown during the war and not to the Legislature.

(7) In the issue of the *Twentieth Century* of January 1941, I again repeated this demand for the National Government at the Centre owing responsibility to the Crown and having power to deal with Finance and Defence. That the Congress also demanded during the war a National Government responsible to the Legislature, and I demanded a National Government at this time responsible to the Crown, may suggest to Mr. Jinnah's mind a common paternity of the idea, but what does Mr. Jinnah want during the war? A National Government or a Government in which he and his party should have the preponderant share? If the latter, it is clear that he has failed to convince those in authority with whom he was negotiating and, therefore, thinks nothing should be done which does not fit in with his scheme of right or wrong or with his plans.

(8) So far as my suggestion of responsibility to the Crown is concerned, it was severely criticised by the Congress Press, but Mr. Jinnah says that "the Conference and its Resolution were received with deepest sympathies by the Congress Press generally" and particularly mentions the *Hindu* in this connection, which he describes as "an out and out Congress Paper."

The *Hindu* may have sympathies with some aspects of the Congress policy, but I have never looked upon it as an "out and out Congress paper."

If Mr. Jinnah had extended the scope of his information, he would have found that some leading Congress papers in Calcutta were not only critical but hostile to the Bombay Resolution, and one at Lucknow which is looked upon as the official organ of the Congress in these Provinces, seems to have joined hands with Mr. Jinnah, not only in opposing the Resolution itself but in denouncing me and my colleagues of the Bombay Conference in language scarcely less vehement than that employed by Mr. Jinnah.

It is true that some other Congress papers at Delhi, Bombay and elsewhere more or less supported the Bombay Resolution. This does not look like conspiracy between the Bombay Conference and Congress generally or "some well-known and prominent Congress leaders who remained in the background."

Mr. Jinnah's regret that this Conference of 'self-appointed

'delegates' was not at once dubbed as a conference of non entities and men who represented nobody. He is quite welcome to insinuate that a conference consisting of men like Sir N N Sircar, Sir Jagadish Prasad, the Maharaja of Burdwan, Mr Savarkar, Dr Moonje, Dr Shyama Prasad Mukerji and others was a conference of non-entities.

Again, Mr Jinnah's chronology is wrong and the inference which he draws from it is equally wrong. He says that the Bombay Conference and its resolution synchronised with the bold lead given by the *Hindu* of Madras urging upon Mahatma Gandhi to give up Satyagraha.

The Conference, be it noted, met at Bombay on March 13 and 14 and it was not until a month later i.e. until April 15 that the *Hindu* wrote an article in which it advised the Mahatma to call off Satyagraha and to mobilise the energies of the Congress for possible practical purposes.

If these dates are borne in mind, it is difficult to see that the Bombay Conference synchronised with the bold lead given by the *Hindu*. A similar article appeared a few days later in the *Times of India*. Mahatma Gandhi issued a statement on April 21 refusing to withdraw Satyagraha. All this does not look like conspiracy. However much I may regret that Mahatma Gandhi did not withdraw the Satyagraha movement, I cannot see how an inference can be drawn from these facts that there was any conspiracy afoot.

Mr Jinnah's complaint is that if the British Government had accepted the Bombay Resolution for National Government at the Centre it would automatically have torpedoed the Muslim League demand of Pakistan. I thought the discussion of the Pakistan had been postponed professedly till after the war and the interim arrangement at the Centre would no more have prevented the Congress or any other party from raising any other demand, but Mr Jinnah will not be content until every other party surrenders to his demand now and at this moment.

Am I to understand that if the condition precedent of Mr Jinnah's demanding agreement to Pakistan is not fulfilled by others at this stage, then he will not mind how long the present deadlock continues and what happens to the whole of the country?

Mr Jinnah has, therefore, issued a warning and an assurance to Mr Amery—a warning against the danger of his having any truck with men whom he does not approve of and who are not prepared to be dictated to by him—an assurance that Mr Amery need not be anxious about the Indian situation because he has the solid support of Mr Jinnah and the Muslim League! Apparently his statement is intended to reinforce Mr Amery. It incidentally also betrays a consciousness of weakness in his position.

Lastly, Mr Jinnah says the Resolution is “a worthless document intended purely for purposes of propaganda to mislead the ignorant and credulous people of India.” I know and I regret that in this country ‘ignorant and credulous people’ have been very much exploited by certain parties, but if the resolution was so worthless, why is Mr Jinnah wasting so much of his time and mine over it? He says he would not take notice of it if my name had not been associated with it. Am I to take it as a tribute to myself or as an implied insult to those of my distinguished countrymen who had assembled at Bombay?

Surely, this is not the spirit in which public controversies should be carried on. This is the spirit of an angry man who has too long played the part of a dictator, but who realises that the challenge to his authority is daily growing and the chances of his favourite theories and scheme being accepted by others including the British are being imperilled every day.

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## Standing Committee's Reply

THE following is the statement issued from Allahabad on May 8, 1941, on behalf of the Standing Committee of the Bombay Conference in reply to Mr Jinnah's statement.

Mr Jinnah's latest statement shows him in any angry mood but is not without its compensations. In his rage he has unwittingly given away his whole case. At the Muslim League meeting in Madras Mr Jinnah adopted the orthodox Delhi view towards the Bombay Conference and compared it to Dutch Army. All generals and no soldiers.

He had even the audacity to say that the Hindu Mahasabha had repudiated it although he must have known that Dr Shyama Prasad Mukerji Acting President of the Mahasabha was a member of the Standing Committee. His attitude came very handy to Mr Amery who said that he was not sure who the actual supporters of the Bombay Resolution were.

The Conference had only claimed that it represented that large body of Indians who was behind the war effort large landowners like the Maharaja of Parakhemedi distinguished businessmen like Sir Ardeshir Dalal, Sir Purahottamdas Thakurdas, Mr Chunilal B Mehta, leaders of parties like Mr Savarkar President of the Hindu Mahasabha, Mr Aney leader of the Congress Nationalist Party Mr Chandavarkar President of the Liberal Federation, prominent members of the Indian Christian community like Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh, and of the Sikh community like Sir Jogendra Singh, Sardar Sant Singh and Sardar Balwant Singh, besides a number of other prominent men. It did not claim that it represented the Congress, the Hindu Sabha or any other political party

Now Mr Jinnah, forgetting what he had said at Madras, asserts that the Conference had not only the support of the Hindu Mahasabha but also of the Congress

If that is so and as he dare not deny that it has the support of the Indian Christians and the Sikhs, then the bottom is knocked out of his former allegation that the Conference proposals had no general support in the country. The objection that the reconstructed Centre would be in perpetual conflict with legislature also falls to the ground.

Mr Jinnah says that if the proposals of the Bombay Conference were accepted every one else will come in except the Muslim League. Mr Jinnah cannot have it both ways. Either the proposals have very large support in the country or they have not. When Mr Jinnah makes his next statement he must make a final choice suitable to the occasion.

Mr Jinnah has now come out in his true colours. No scheme of Government will satisfy him even for the period of war unless it is in furtherance of the disruption of India. And yet Mr Amery

asks the President of the Conference Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, to address his proposals not to the British Parliament but to Mr Jinnah

America fought a civil war to maintain its unity. The Indians must accept the principles of 'Balkanising' their country before they can even be allowed to approach the Secretary of State for India with proposals for wielding or even sharing power with Indians at the Centre for the more vigorous prosecution of the war. The Committee would ask all right minded men to consider whether in view of Mr. Jinnah's latest pronouncement any negotiation with him is possible except on the basis of destroying the unity of the country

Will Mr Jinnah explain a little more directly how the Conference proposals are likely to injure the Muslims? Is Mr Jinnah opposed in his heart of hearts to the appointment of an Indian as Defence member? If he is, he should so say publicly. Does he think that the demand for the appointment of an Indian as Finance Member is unreasonable? Is he in favour of an Executive Council composed of English civil servants and non-official Indians during the period of war? Then why does he hesitate to make known his views? What is it exactly that he wants? What reconstruction of the Central Government will satisfy him? Why does he like Mr Amery content himself merely with a negative attitude?

And when he says that the Conference proposals are meant to torpedo the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan, are the Committee to interpret this political announcement as follows. The suspension of the constitution in seven provinces, in six of which the Hindus are in a majority, has deprived them of the political power and influence. If by intransigence and threats the stalemate is prolonged till the end of the war, the chances of the Hindus ever regaining political power will be very greatly reduced.

Meanwhile efforts should continue to form Anglo-Muslim alliance under the emotional stress of the war and every endeavour should be made to divide the Hindus further by Mr Jinnah speaking as the champion of the Scheduled Castes, of the Justice Party or of any other party that may be willing to come under Mr Jinnah's wing. By this process of political arithmetic Mr Jinnah will not only re-

present hundred million Muslims but sixty millions of Scheduled castes and millions of non-Brahmins of Southern India in fact the majority of the inhabitants of Hindustan.

Contrariwise, should the Central Government be so reconstructed as to lessen the feeling of frustration among large sections of the Indian people and should Muslims and non Muslims begin to work together to save their country from grave and impending dangers, from the east and west, then the process of a common endeavour may make people forget the poisonous doctrine that Hindus and Muslims can never unite. What will then happen to the cry of Pakistan and Mr Jinnah's leadership?

Therefore, it is political prudence to lay emphasis on things that divide, to ignore those that unite, so that there may be no political settlement in the country and Mr Jinnah may continue to be the overlord of India.

The Committee are more convinced than ever that the political future of India should not be allowed to be dependent on Mr Jinnah's dictate.

At the Bombay Conference the question of Pakistan was not discussed but it would now be a dereliction of duty to the country if when the next Conference meets early in July the imperative need of preserving the unity of India is not prominently brought before the Indian people.

The Committee have left to the last a categorical reply to Mr Jinnah's allegations as to the origin and objects of the Conference.

No Congressman was consulted as to the need for a Conference or as to its objects. The proposal to hold a conference was mooted at Calcutta in November 1939 when Kunwar Sir Jagadish Prasad discussed the matter with Sir N. N. Sarkar and one or two others. Sir Jagadish Prasad then saw Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru at Allahabad early in December and discussed the proposal with him. He saw a very distinguished member of the Liberal Party and a few others—Liberals and non Liberals—in Bombay in January. They all agreed to the holding of the Conference.

A circular letter was issued early in February over Sir Jagadish Prasad's signature to a number of prominent men outside the Congress and the Muslim League and as soon as sufficient number of acceptances had been received, it was decided to hold the Conference in Bombay during the Holi Holidays to suit the convenience of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru.

The organisers of the Conference had no idea at the time as to when the debate in Parliament would take place. The dates were fixed without any reference to it whatever.

Mr. Srinivasan, the editor of the *Hindu*, had absolutely no hand either in originating the Conference, in defining its scope or in drafting the resolution which was passed.

The allegations that Mr. Srinivasan prevailed on Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to convene the Conference at the instance of Mr. Rajagopalachari is pure fiction.

Mr. Jinnah asserts that he has ample information on which to base his allegations. Let him publish it so that the public may judge for itself of its value. The free use of vituperative adjectives may be useful in arguing a weak case in a court of law but is wholly inappropriate in dealing with great public issues. But the people are by now fully aware of Mr. Jinnah's controversial technique, and insolent threats hurled with the pose and in the manner of a dictator.

Is he sure that circumstances and exigencies of the international situation which have artificially inflated his stock will always remain to his advantage? Politicians like others have their vicissitudes. No one should know this better than Mr. Jinnah.



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## APPENDIX VII

### THROUGH THE NATION'S SPECTROSCOPE

*In the following pages are reproduced articles that mirror the genuine national perspective and reflect general political opinion prevailing throughout the country.*

*Pandit Jawaharlal's article needs no comment. Sparks from Haiijan are Gandhiji's views. The most moderate of moderates, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Shrinivasa Shastri speaks in the clearest language fully supporting the stand taken by the Congress and justifying Gandhiji's attitude.*

*Three editorials each, from the Hindu, Madras, and the Bombay Sentinel respectively are reproduced and they speak for themselves. The former by no means an 'out and out pro-Congress' organ and the latter which may be called an extremist nationalist organ edited by a great Indian who is an Englishman.*

## Parting of Ways

*Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote the following as an epilogue to the American edition of his autobiography. This appeared in The Nation dated Feb 1, 1941*

Five and a half years ago, sitting in my prison barrack in the Al-mora District Jail, I wrote the last line of my autobiography. Eight months later I added a post-script from Badenweiler in Germany. That autobiography published in England had a kindly reception from all manner of people in various countries and I was glad that what I had written had brought India nearer to many friends abroad and had made them appreciate, to some extent, the inner significance of our struggle for freedom. Unfortunately this book did not reach the American public and various happenings conspired to delay an American edition. I am happy that at last it is going to appear in a new garb in America.

My publisher asked me to add to it in order to bring it up to date. His demand was reasonable and I could not deny it. And yet I find it no easy matter to comply with it. We live in strange times, when life's normal course has been completely upset and it is

difficult for me even to communicate with my publisher America seems to be very far away from India now, and sometimes it takes many months for letters to cross the oceans

I was affected more than others by the development of events in Europe and the Far East Munich was a shock, hard to bear, and the tragedy of Spain became a personal sorrow to me As these years of horror succeeded one another, the sense of impending catastrophe overwhelmed me, and my faith in a bright future for the world became dim.

And now the catastrophe has come The volcanoes in Europe spit fire and destruction, and here in India, I sit on the edge of another volcano, not knowing when it may burst It is difficult to tear myself away from the problem of the moment, to develop the mood of retrospection and survey these five years that have gone by, and write calmly about them I shall endeavour, therefore, as best I may, to refer briefly only to certain events and developments in which I have played a part or which have affected me

Again and again, during the past few years, I considered resigning from my position as head of the Congress Executive I found it difficult to work smoothly with my own colleagues, and it became clear to me that they viewed my activities with apprehension It was not so much that they objected to any specific act, but they disliked the general trend and direction They had justification for this, as my outlook was different I was completely loyal to Congress decisions, but I emphasised other aspects I decided finally to resign and I informed Gandhi of my decision

Soon afterward a far-away occurrence, unconnected with India, affected me greatly and made me change my decision This was the news of General Franco's revolt in Spain. I saw this rising, with its background of German and Italian assistance, developing into a European or even a world conflict India was bound to be drawn into this, and I could not afford to weaken our organisation and create an internal crisis by resigning just when it was essential for us to pull together. I was not wholly wrong in my analysis of the situation, though I was premature and my mind rushed to conclusions which took some years to materialise.

The reaction of the Spanish War on me indicates how, in my mind, the problem of India was tied up with other world problems. More and more I came to think that these separate problems, political or economic, in China, Abyssinia, Spain, Central Europe, India, or elsewhere, were facets of one and the same world problem. There could be no final solution of any one of them till this basic problem was solved. And in all probability there would be upheaval and disaster before the final solution was reached. As peace was said to be indivisible in the present-day world so also freedom was indivisible, and the world could not continue for long part free, part unfree. The challenge of Fascism and Nazism was in essence the challenge of Imperialism. They were twin brothers, with this variation, that Imperialism functioned abroad in colonies and dependencies while Fascism and Nazism functioned in the same way in the home country also. If freedom was to be established in the world, not only Fascism and Nazism had to go, but Imperialism had to be completely liquidated.

This reaction to foreign events was not confined to me. Many others in India began, to some extent, to feel that way and even the public was interested. This public interest was kept up by thousands of meetings and demonstrations that the Congress organised all over the country in sympathy with the people of China Abyssinia Palestine and Spain. Some attempts were also made by us to send aid in the shape of medical supplies and food to China and Spain. This wider interest in international affairs helped to raise our own national struggle to a higher level and to lessen somewhat the narrowness which is always a feature of nationalism.

Soon after my return from Europe at the end of 1938, two other activities claimed by attention. I presided over the All India States Peoples Conference at Ludhiana and thus became even more intimately connected with the progressive movements in the semi-feudal Indian States. In large numbers of these States there had been a growing ferment, occasionally leading to clashes between the peoples organisations and the authorities, which were often helped by British troops. It is difficult to write in restrained language about these States or about the part that the British Government have played in maintaining these relics of the Middle Ages. A recent writer has rightly called them Britain's Fifth Column in India.

In the summer of 1939, I paid a brief visit to Ceylon, as friction had grown there between the Indian residents and the Government. I was happy to be back again in that beautiful Island, and my visit, I think, laid the foundations for closer relations between India and Ceylon. I had the most cordial welcome from everybody, including the Ceylonese members of the Government. I have no doubt that in any future order Ceylon and India must hang together. My own picture of the future is a federation which includes China and India, Burma and Ceylon, Afghanistan, and possibly other countries. If a world federation comes, that will be welcome.

War and India. What were we to do? For years past we had thought about this and proclaimed our policy. Yet in spite of all this, the British Government declared India to be a belligerent country without any reference to our people, to the Central Assembly, or to the provincial governments. That was a slight that was hard to take, for it signified that Imperialism functioned as before. The Congress Working Committee issued a long statement in the middle of September, 1939, in which our past and present policy was defined and the British Government was invited to explain its war aims, more particularly in regard to British Imperialism. We had frequently condemned Fascism and Nazism, but we were more intimately concerned with the Imperialism that dominated over us. Was this Imperialism to go? Did they recognise the independence of India and her right to frame her own constitution through a Constituent Assembly? What immediate steps would be taken to introduce popular control of the Central Government? Later, in order to meet every possible objection of any minority group, the idea behind the Constituent Assembly was further amplified. It was stated that minority claims would be settled in this Assembly with the consent of the minority concerned, and not by a majority vote. If such agreement was not possible in regard to any issue, then this was to be referred to an impartial tribunal for final decision. This was an unsafe proposal from a democratic point of view, but the Congress was prepared to go almost any length in order to allay the suspicions of minorities.

The British Government's answer was clear. It left no doubt that they were not prepared to clarify their war aims or to hand over control of the government to the people's representatives. The old

## *A Nation at Bay*

order continued and was to continue, and British interests in India could not be left unprotected. The Congress Ministries in the provinces thereupon resigned, as they were not prepared to co-operate on these terms in the prosecution of the war. The constitution was suspended, and autocratic rule was re-established. The old constitutional conflict of western countries between an elected Parliament and the King's prerogative, which had cost the heads of two kings in England and France, took shape in India. But there was something much more than this constitutional aspect. The volcano was not in action, but it was there and rumblings were heard.

The impasse continued, and meanwhile, new laws and ordinances descended upon us by decree, and *Congressmen and others* were arrested in evergrowing numbers. Resentment grew and a demand arose for action on our side. But the course of the war and the peril of England itself made us hesitate, for we could not wholly forget the old lesson which Gandhiji had taught us, that our objective should not be to embarrass the opponent in his hour of need.

As the war progressed new problems arose, or the old problems took new shape, and the old alignments seemed to change, the old standards to fade away. There were many shocks, and adjustment was difficult: the Russo-German Pact, the Soviets' invasion of Finland, the friendly approach of Russia toward Japan. Were there any principles or any standards of conduct in this world, or was it all sheer opportunism?

April came and the Norwegian debacle. May brought the horrors of Holland and Belgium. June the sudden collapse of France and Paris, that proud and fair city nursery of freedom, lay crushed and fallen. Not only military defeat came to France, but what was infinitely worse: spiritual submission and degradation. How did all this come about, I wondered, unless there was something rotten at the core? Was it that England and France were the outstanding representatives of an old order that must pass and therefore unable to hold out? Was it that Imperialism though apparently giving them strength really weakened them in a struggle of this nature? They could not fight for freedom if they denied it themselves and their imperialism would turn to unabashed Fascism as it had done in France. The shadow of Neville Chamberlain and his old policy still fell on England.

The Burma-China route was being closed in order to appease Japan. And here in India there was no hint of change, and our self-imposed restraint was understood to mean an incapacity to do anything effective. The lack of any vision in the British Government amazed me, its utter incapacity to read the signs of the times and adapt itself accordingly. Was this some law of nature that in international happenings, as in other fields, cause must inexorably be followed by effect, that a system that had ceased to have any useful function could not even defend itself intelligently?

If the British Government were slow of understanding and could not learn even from experience, what can one say about the Government of India? There is something comic and something tragic about the functioning of this Government, for nothing seems to shake it out of its age-long complacency, neither logic nor reason, neither peril nor disaster. Like Rip Van Winkle, it sleeps, even though awake, on Simla hill.

The developments in the war situation posed new questions before the Congress Working Committee, Gandhiji wanted the Committee to extend the principle of non-violence, to which we had adhered in our struggle for freedom, to the functioning of a free State. A free India must rely on this principle to guard itself against external aggression or internal disorder. This question did not raise itself for us at the time, but it occupied Gandhiji's mind, and he felt that the time had come for a clear enunciation. Every one of us was convinced that we must adhere to our policy of non-violence, as we had so far done in our own struggle. The war in Europe had strengthened this conviction. But to commit the future State was another and a more difficult matter, and it was not easy to see how anyone moving on the plane of politics could do it.

Gandhiji felt, and probably rightly, that he could not give up or tone down a message which he had for the world. He must have freedom to give it as he liked and must not be kept back by political exigencies. So, for the first time, he went one way and the Congress Working Committee another. There was no break with him for the bond was too strong, and he will no doubt continue to advise in many ways and often to lead. Yet it is perhaps true that by his partial withdrawal a definite period in the history of our national



movement has come to an end. In recent years I have found a certain hardness creeping into him a lessening of the adaptability that he possessed. Yet the old spell is there, the old charm works, and his personality and greatness tower over others. Let no one imagine that his influence over India's millions is any the less. He has been the architect of India's destiny for twenty years and more and his work is not completed.

The Congress, at the instance of Mr C. Rajagopalachari made yet another offer to Britain. Mr Rajagopalachari is said to belong to the Right in the Congress. His brilliant intellect, selfless character and penetrating powers of analysis have been a tremendous asset to our cause. He was the Prime Minister of Madras during the functioning of the Congress Government there. Eager to avoid conflict he put forward a proposal which was hesitatingly accepted by some of his colleagues. This proposal was the acknowledgement of India's independence by Britain and the immediate formation at the Centre of a Provisional National Government which would be responsible to the present Central Assembly. If this were done, this Government would take charge of defence and thus help in the war-effort.

This Congress proposal was eminently feasible and could be effectuated immediately without upsetting anything. The National Government was inevitably going to be a composite affair with full representation of minority groups. The proposal was definitely a moderate one. From the point of view of defence and war effort, it is patent that any serious effort involves the confidence and co-operation of the people. Only a national government has the chance to get this. It is not possible through Imperialism.

But Imperialism thinks otherwise and imagines that it can continue to function and to coerce people to do its will. Even when danger threatens, it is not prepared to get this very substantial help if it involves giving up political and economic control over India. It does not care even for the tremendous moral prestige which would come to it if it did the right thing in India, and the rest of the Empire.

As I write this, the Viceroy has given us the British Government's reply. It is in the old language of Imperialism, and the content has changed in no way. The sands of time run out here in India as in Europe and the world.

So many of my colleagues have gone back to prison, and I envy them somewhat. Perhaps it is easier to develop an organic sense of life in the solitude of confinement than in this mad world of war and politics, of Fascism and Imperialism.

But sometimes there is an escape for a while at least from this world. Last month I went back to Kashmir after an absence of twenty-three years. I was only there for twelve days, but these days were filled with beauty, and I drank in the loveliness of that land of enchantment. I wandered about the valley and the mountain, and climbed a glacier, and felt that life was worthwhile.

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## Sparks From "Harijan"

### Chaos In Europe

"I told His Excellency that my own sympathies were with England and France from the purely humanitarian standpoint. I told him that I could not contemplate without being stirred to the very depth the destruction of London which had hitherto been regarded as impregnable. And as I was picturing before him the Houses of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down. I have become disconsolate. In the secret of my heart I am in perpetual quarrel with God that He should allow such things to go on. My non-violence seems almost impotent. But the answer comes at the end of a daily quarrel that neither God nor non-violence is impotent. Impotence is in men. I must try on without losing faith even though I may break in the attempt."

### No Endorsement

"However incomplete or equivocal the declarations of the Allies are, the world has interpreted them to mean that they are fighting for saving democracy. Herr Hitler is fighting for the extension of the German boundaries, although he was told that he should allow his claims to be submitted to an impartial tribunal for examination. He contemptuously rejected the way of peace or persuasion and chose that of the sword. Hence my sympathy for the cause of the Allies. But my sympathy must not be interpreted to mean endorsement, in any shape or form, of the doctrine of the sword for the defence even.

of proved right. Proved right should be capable of being vindicated by right means as against the rude, i.e. sanguinary means. Man may and should shed his own blood for establishing what he considers to be his right. He may not shed the blood of his opponent who disputes his right. India as represented by the Congress has been fighting in order to prove her right not by the sword but by the non-violent method. And she has carved out for herself a unique place and prestige in the world although she is yet far — let us hope, not very far—from the independence of her dream. Her novel method has evidently struck the imagination of the world. It has the right to expect India to play a decisive part in this war which no people of the world have wanted by insisting that the peace this time is not to be a mockery designed to share among the victors the spoils of war and to humiliate the vanquished.

### Englishmen

"I am as determined a foe of the exploitation of my country as any one can be. I am as impatient as the hottest Congressman for the complete deliverance of the country from the foreign yoke. But I have no hate for a single Englishman and for that matter for anybody on earth. If I may not help the Allies I do not wish disaster to them. Though the British Government have grievously disappointed the Congress hope, my hope, I do not seek any gain from their embarrassment.

"My attempt and my prayer are and will be for an honourable peace between the belligerent nations in the least possible time. I had nursed the hope that there would be an honourable peace and partnership between Britain and India and that I might be able to play a humble part in finding a way out of the awful carnage that is disgracing humanity and making life itself a burden. But God had willed it otherwise.

October 28 1939

### Free Vote

"I fail to see why Britain's intention about India should be dependent upon Muslim Hindu or any other opinion. The only opinion that counts is India's opinion. India's opinion can only be ascertained by the free vote of her people. The only true and democra

tic method is to ascertain their will through adult suffrage or any agreed equivalent. So far as the Congress is concerned, the people of Princes' India should be represented precisely on the same footing as those of British India. The Muslims and other accepted minorities may be represented by separate electorate, if necessary, and in the exact proportion of their numbers. They will determine what is required for their protection. In all matters of common interest a composite majority decision should prevail. If a better way than a Constituent Assembly can be found for knowing the will of the people, so far as I know, the Congress will accept it without hesitation. Neither the size of the country, nor the illiteracy of the masses should be a bar against adult suffrage. The election campaign will itself be sufficient education for the purpose of broadly knowing the popular will."

### **Reason and Faith**

"What you want is already at Britain's disposal. She draws men and money without let or hindrance. Unless violence breaks out, she will continue to get these. The Congress won't tolerate violence, let us assume. Then Britain has nothing to fear from the Congress in the violent way. And I hold that, considered from the non-violent standpoint, which, in my opinion, is the only point worth considering, it would be immoral for the Congress to give her moral support to Britain unless the latter's moral position is made clear.

"I do not lay down the law as you do about Nazism. Germans are as much human beings as you and I are. Nazism like other 'isms' is a toy of today. It will share the same fate as the other 'isms'."

"I fancy I see the distinction between you and me. You, as a Westerner, cannot subordinate reason to faith. I, as an Indian, cannot subordinate faith to reason even if I will. You tempt the Lord God with your reason, I won't."

December 23, 1939

### **Cultural Ruination**

"Political subjection is patent, Cultural and spiritual conquest has at no time in India's history been so complete as during the British rule. It is none the less galling or degrading because there

has been a voluntary surrender. A victim's conquest is complete when he hugs the chains that bind him and begins to imitate the manners and customs of his captor. Our household was turned upside down when my father had to attend the Durbar during a Governor's visit. He never wore stockings or boots or what were then called "who'e boots." His general foot wear was soft leather slippers. If I was a painter I could paint my father's disgust and torture on his face as he was putting his legs into his stockings and feet into ill-fitting and uncomfortable boots. He had to do this! I happened to be in Calcutta when Lord Curzon was holding his levee. I was staying in the Indian Club. The toilet of the Rajas and Maharajas who were staying there was a study. They looked like second editions of *kansamas*. Their ordinary dress was simple dhoti with the inimitable Bengali folds which only the Bengali wearers can produce and spotlessly white *kurtia* and a thin shawl carelessly but gracefully flung round the body. But this was considered indecent dress for the levee of the Crown Representative. The big zamindars and the princes must appear properly bedecked and bejewelled.

Is not this cultural and spiritual degradation?"

February 3 1940.

### Defence

"Reality demands that India should determine what she needs, not Britain. There could be no justice or virtue in Britain yielding to successful rebellion violent or non violent. Will present problems be then deemed to be dissolved? It is necessary for Britain to be just to declare her determination to recognize immediately the free dom of India in practice, and the constitution to be framed by the Constituent Assembly or an equivalent as soon as practicable. There is no analogy between the Dominions and India. Here is a case by itself and has to be treated as such. It should be clearly understood that every problem is of Britain's own making. What has happened was no doubt a necessity of imperialism. But if imperialism dies, the problems of Britain's making will be automatically dissolved. Defence is the greatest of all. Why did Britain disarm India? Why have even Indian soldiers become foreigners in their own land? Why did Britain create Princes and arm them with unheard-of powers? Surely for making her foothold secure. Who created the gigantic European interests and why? Who created

minorities? There is no majority save the political majority. But these four were and still are bulwarks of imperialism. No jugglery of words can hide this naked truth. Britain's moral victory will be assured when she decides by a mighty effort to abandon her immoral hold on India; and then her other victory will follow as day follows night. For, then, the conscience of the whole world will be on her side. No makeshift such as is now offered can stir India's heart or world conscience."

### **Status**

"The legal status of India, whether it is Dominion Status or something else, can only come after the war. It is not a question at present to decide whether India should be satisfied with Dominion Status for the time being. The only question is: What is the British policy? Does Great Britain still hold the view that it is her sole right to determine the status of India or whether it is the sole right of India to make that determination? If that question had not been raised, there would have been no discussion such as we are facing today. The question having been raised—and it was India's right to raise it—I was bound to throw in my weight, such as it is, with the Congress. Nevertheless I can still repeat the question I put to myself immediately after the first interview with the Viceroy: 'Of what value is freedom to India if Britain and France fail?' If these Powers fail, the history of Europe and the history of the world will be written in a manner no one can foresee. Therefore, my question has its own independent value. The relevant point, however, is that by doing justice to India Britain might ensure victory of the Allies because their cause will then be acclaimed as righteous by the enlightened opinion of the world."

April 27, 1940

### **Congress and War**

"I have declared already that I shall do nothing to embarrass Great Britain. She will be embarrassed if there is anarchy in India. That the Congress, so long as it is under my discipline, will not support

"What the Congress cannot do is to lend its moral influence to Britain. Moral influence is never mechanically given. It is for Britain to take it. Perhaps British states-

men do not think the Congress has any to lend. Perhaps they think that all they need is material aid in this warring world. If they do, they will not be far wrong. Morality is contraband in war.

I do not wish ill to Britain. I shall grieve if Britain goes down. But the moral influence of the Congress cannot avail Britain unless she washes her hands clean of India. It works under its own unalterable condition."

May 4, 1940.

### Ready To Wait

"If the British Government will not *suo motu* declare India as a free country having the right to determine her own status and constitution, I am of opinion that we should wait till the heat of the battle in the heart of the Allied countries subsides and the future is clearer than it is. We do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin. That is not the way of non-violence.

"But we shall have many opportunities of demonstrating our power if we really have it. We can make it felt at the time of peace which must come whichever party wins."

June 1, 1940.

### Congress Restraint

"Col Amery has grievously erred in underrating the restraint that the Congress has exercised in postponing civil disobedience in order not to embarrass the British Government at a most crucial period in the history of the British. The restraint expects no appreciation. It is inherent in Satyagraha. Therefore, it is a duty. And the discharge of a duty carries no merit, even as payment of a debt does not. Nevertheless mention of the restraint becomes relevant in order to show that but for that restraint a conflagration may burst forth whose effect no one can foresee.

"It is true that civil disobedience remains in suspension also because of the internal defects in the Congress organization. But I have said repeatedly that, if the Congress is goaded to it the science of Satyagraha is not without a mode of application in spite of the internal weaknesses. Therefore, the final and deciding motive for suspension is undoubtedly the desire not to embarrass the British Government at the present moment."

August 4, 1940.

## India and War

"It is my firm conviction that British statesmen have failed to do the right thing when it was easy to do it. If India is wholly in favour of participation in the war, they could have easily disregarded any hostile propaganda. But the determination to gag free expression of opinion, provided it was not in the least tainted with violence, shatters Britain's claim that India's participation is voluntary. Had the Congress proposal been accepted, such aid as Britain would have got from India, would have been an asset of inestimable value. The non-violent party would have played an effective part for honourable peace when the proper time for it was in sight, as it must be some day."

October 6, 1940

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## Congress Must Be Back

*Following is the speech of the Rt Hon Shrinivasa Shastri delivered at a meeting held under the auspices of the Saturday Club at the Ranade Hall in Madras on April 26, 1941.*

THE times are very very critical. Not a moment is to be lost in finding out who are the most competent by spirit, by experience and by courage to help us. Judging all things, it seems to me, I am not a Congressman—that outside Congress there is at present no body of people who have our trust in the same measure and who have, therefore, laid upon them the supreme duty of coming back and resuming power and defending the people who pathetically trust them. It was essential that the chosen leaders of the Congress should be at the helm if the new situation that would arise any day and complications not to be foreseen now were to be successfully tackled.

Mahatma Gandhi has made a statement on Mr Amery's recent pronouncement. Every line and every word of it breathes indignation,—indignation of a type somewhat unusual with the Mahatma. I have not had the time to revolve the statement in my mind and I dare not trust myself to make any observations on it. But I would recommend



it to you all for profound study. I would also venture a comment on Mr Amery's speech, though I wonder whether you would agree with my interpretation of it.

While standing by the famous August declaration and repeating all his o'd ideas Mr Amery has, upon this occasion, apparently with sincerity regretted as much as most of us do that the Congress should have retired, as it were, from the seats of power and chosen to support a campaign of civil disobedience. He does not say as he might, and as he would have done if he had felt it, that the British Government feel relieved that there is no Congress Government sitting in any of the seven provinces. He says he and the Government of England are profoundly sorry that they have not got the assistance of the Congress Governments. If that is so, and if our appeal to the Congress leaders finds favourable reception and the Congress decides to come back to its positive duties in the country may we hope that Mr Amery and the Viceroy will not have any difficulty but will welcome them with open arms?

Our move in this province under the leadership of *The Hindu* in calling on the Congress leaders to come back to their seats of authority in the various provinces is supplementary to the Bombay Conference. The Bombay Conference, you will remember dealt exclusively with the proposals for the reorganization of the Centre in India. The provinces were left alone, possibly under the feeling that if the Centre were reconstructed according to our wishes, the provinces would follow suit. We are here concerned with the provinces. But supposing Mr Amery's No were final and nothing would shake the determination of the Government of Great Britain to introduce changes in the desired condition,—we should all very much regret it no doubt but we need not for that reason give up this idea in reference to the provinces—if that unfortunate event happens, and Mr Amery digs his toes into the ground, the necessity for our having our chosen leaders in the seats of power is only rendered the more pressing. Remember the present phase of the war is of the most alarming nature. It is a nameless terror that seizes our hearts today. All things look black and sinister. May be as the Mahatma emphatically says, India would be thrown upon her own resources and Great Britain be unable to defend us any longer. In

nal troubles of a very acute kind inflamed by the communal animosities, of which most disconcerting evidences are cropping up every day all over the country, disturbances stirred up by these and similar causes are likely to make us sleepless. Whom then should we have at the helm? Supposing the British arm weakened—God forbid it—and we had to defend ourselves, shall we be in a kind of unorganised assemblage of people or shall we have at the helm the leaders chosen by us? May be, they may not be able to do much for us, but still they are our leaders. New situations will arise every day. Complications not to be foreseen now may cloud the skies and cause nightmares to everyone amongst us. Should we or should we not have our chosen leaders at the helm? That is my point now and that has been my point for a long time.

Where are the people, whom with such acclaim, we elected to be our leaders in the various provincial Cabinets? They are all in jail today. Who are occupying their places? A Government by Advisers, not our people, and their paid employees. Is that a state of things that a body of sensible electors should countenance? I do not mean to throw the blame on anyone. But I wish we should all express our view in the matter as sensible men, as householders with a stake in the country, with children to protect, with women whose honour is to us more sacred than anything else. What could we do, unorganized as we are?

Changing the picture, let us for a moment visualise it with the Congress leaders, as before, established in the various Provincial Governments. May be, they had only three-fourths of the authority that should belong to Provincial Governments but, still, they were armed with something with which they could stand forward, talk to outsiders and put down trouble-makers. Supposing we had leaders of that kind established in the various provinces, should we not be a little more emboldened than we are now? I tell you, whatever your feelings may be, I am full of alarm. I am full of concern, I feel abandoned—abandoned, is the word—by those who ought to be here to protect me. That is the line that we take. We ask the Congress people to come back, lead us and protect us in this time of great trouble. Their place today, as people who hold our confidence and suffrage, is beside us and not in prison cells. They may be very usefully

occupied there, spinning or carding or whatever else it might be but that would not avail us, when the enemy is at the door when the robber and the dacoit are disturbing the peace of our homes. We want a volunteer force, organized, held under tight control, doing policemen's duty but not doing policemen's oppression. We want a force animated wholly by the patriotic desire to be servants and defenders of the public. Now tell me, are the paid police the people whom we should trust to be so? Should we not ask for and should we not desire that a force directed and inspired by the patriotism and ideals of the Congress, and officered controlled and governed under Congress auspices should be at our disposal? Do not think that that time is far off. It looked far a few months ago but today it is quite near. Tomorrow before we wake up, trouble might come, and you will wring your hands and call aloud for someone whom you could trust. Men whom we trusted whom we clothed with authority to whom we assigned the special task of preparing the country for defending itself—those men are nowhere to be found. They must be brought back from jail and installed again in the places that they occupied before this wrong was adopted.

As to how the Congress leaders are to be brought back, this could not be achieved by merely wishing it. The process and the *modus operandi* should be left to wiser heads acting together. May be we might ask the Government to release them, so that they might consult together and devise measures for the protection of the country which the Government might not be able in spite of their obvious duty to do. May be we should ask the Congress leaders themselves to agree to come back and do their duty if they are allowed to. May be two moves would have to be arranged together. I have no clear notion of these just now

## Yet Another "No"

MR AMERY like the Bourbons learns nothing and forgets nothing. With an ostrich-like complacency that is truly appalling he assures the House of Commons that "whatever political unrest there may be in India today has certainly not arisen in any way from the suspension

of provincial self-government", and that the House could safely agree to the extension of the Adviser regimes for another twelve months Mr Amery cannot help contrasting what he regards as "the absence of any signs of distress" in the Indian provincial electorates over the eclipse of popular government with "what would be the attitude of our own electors if deprived of the services of this Front Bench" No doubt he was conscious of a pleasant sense of national superiority in instituting the comparison But if he really believed that "the change to direct personal government by the Governors and permanent officials met with general acquiescence and indeed with good-will", the logical conclusion would be that the Indian people positively hugged their slavery, being unique in this respect How comes it, then, that Mr. Amery, nevertheless, interlarded his speech with references to democracy and self-government and worked in a peroration about "our further contribution towards the completion of our own task in India, the task of joining with them (Indians) in crowning the peace and unity already achieved with freedom"? Poor Mr Amery has not the eyes to see that, if there is no trouble in India today for him and his subordinates to worry over, it is not because the people of the Congress Provinces delight in their chains but because they are intelligent enough and disciplined enough to follow the leadership of the Congress and to respect Gandhiji's resolve that Britain shall in no way be embarrassed in her time of trial Mr Amery cannot apparently understand such chivalry and considerateness

His little lecture of the implications of responsible government and the menace of party totalitarianism similarly suffers in impressiveness from his inability to see beyond his nose Could anything be more comic than his solemn effort to discover in the non-Congress Provinces patterns of democratic self-government? He assures them that they shall have their due reward—an important voice "in any deliberations affecting the future constitution of India" It is in the fitness of things that Mr Amery should proclaim in advance his resolve to be guided by those communalists who in Sind and Bengal have abdicated the elementary function of governments—to maintain peace and security—and have encouraged communal ill-feeling so blatantly that men like Prof H C Mookerji, who are no Congressmen and who belong to minority communities themselves, declare that what is happening in these non-Congress Provinces to-day is a tragic foretaste of Pakistan.

Mr Amery we quite realise, will not be much impressed by such disinterested testimony. All his fulminations are reserved for the Congress High Command towards Mr Jinnah and the Muslim League he takes care to use language, which if it is not quite like the cooing of the dove is hardly more terrible than the squeak of the mouse. The terms of his reference to Pakistan reveal, not a stern resolve to turn down once for all Mr Jinnah's plan for destroying that unity of India to which Britain still pays lip-service, but a painful anxiety to placate the League by suggesting that what worries Mr Amery is not the idea of vivisection itself but the practical difficulties it involves and that none would be happier than he if these difficulties could be overcome. But if he is so impressed—as to impress it in his turn, on the House of Commons—by “the underlying determination of Muslim India not to accept any constitution which does not give reasonable free play to the individual life of predominantly Muslim units” is it not idle to suppose that the legitimate aspirations of a great nation could be checked and thwarted indefinitely by Britain even though her will may be backed by big battalions? Mr Amery makes the mistake common enough to those in his position of supposing that the Congress is a back number this will be obvious from his jocular references to Satyagraha movement and from the pitying tone in which he tells the Congress that it is “blind to the risk that no alternative constitution is now likely to emerge which could secure for it as great a measure of influence and control over India as a whole as it would have exercised under the present Act” “Praise in departing” is, in Prospero's language the friendly caution we would give Mr Amery who is a little premature in proclaiming the demise of the Congress. And though he may not understand it, we would assure him that the Congress having never planned to dominate India will not be sorry to hear that the chance has passed. Its aim is something very different—that neither Britain nor the communalists and vested interests who dance to her tune deluding themselves all the while that it was they who called the tune shall keep the people of India out of their lawful heritage.

Regarded from this point of view the Congress's refusal to accept the Viceroy's August offer should not at all be difficult to understand. Mr Amery glibly recounted once again all the reasons why India should see in his farmyard goose a royal swan. In reply we need

only cite the testimony of one of his most ardent admirers Sir George Schuster, in the course of the debate yesterday, said "Let Indians come in as members of the Viceroy's Council in the same position in which other Indians had gone into the Council in the past. That was what the Secretary of State offered, but all Indian political leaders, not only the Congress, would not have it." So much for Mr Amery's elaborate pretence, on the one hand that the Viceroy's offer meant real transfer of power, on the other hand that 'acceptance in principle' among all parties other than Congress. He had equally little warrant for the complacent remark that, "apart from the Congress the Government's major policy for the constitutional future"—to distinguish it from the interim proposals—"may be said to have relieved the anxieties of the various elements which compose India's national structure." Apart from the Muslim League, which *pace* Mr Jinnah and his new admirer, the Secretary for India, is neither India, nor even Muslim India by a long chalk, no party in India—nor all Englishmen, as will be seen from the note of dissent struck by more than one speaker in the course of the Commons debate, though Mr Amery likes to think otherwise—feels reassured by the British Government's policy or shares its ridiculous optimism. Mr Amery violently disagrees with the view that his policy is one of drift. But what other description could possibly apply to the British Government's attitude that, in the absence of agreement between the major political parties, nothing can be done and that, even as regards exploring the avenues of agreement, "the main responsibility for both the invitation and the completion of this high inquiry rests with Indians themselves?" That the absence of agreement among Indians is but a mere pretext will be seen from the casual manner, bordering on levity, with which Mr Amery has dismissed the Bombay Conference proposals. Their plan for reconstitution of the Viceroy's Council, he says, "is certainly something going beyond what *we* think practicable", then, why pretend that it is India's united demand and not Britain's high pleasure that really matters? Having taken up the stand that it is for Britain to decide what is the quantum of power that the reconstituted Centre shall have and having made it clear that that power will be practically nil, what is the sense in urging, as an objection against the Bombay proposals, that "there is obviously no such agreement here (that is, between the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha over the Bombay proposals) as would

afford the reconstructed Council political support, or even acquiescence in the Legislature"? And why should Mr Amery regard the possible lack of the Legislature's backing as a fatal defect in the Bombay scheme when, with regard to his pet scheme of August last, he insisted that irresponsibility of the new Councillors to the Legislature would be regarded as a positive merit? And when he advises Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and his friends to build up a Centre Party on which, he suggests they could climb to power can he have forgotten that he began by positing that the Indian electorate was a cypher—an assumption which, if true, would make a Centre Party based on such an electorate equally a cypher?

Mr Amery declared that he could not contemplate without a certain sense of frustration or depression the difficulty "not so much in the devolution of authority as in making sure that there is an authority in India which can take over and will not break down or break up in the process" But if as he says, "there is no essential difficulty so far as this country's (Britain's) intentions are concerned" and if she is really anxious and united in wishing to confer on India Dominion Status immediately after the war how can she justifiably delay implementing her pledges solely because a break-down or a break up is a remote possibility? It is humanly impossible to make sure, before handing over power that such a thing shall not happen at all and in fact Britain made no such stipulation with regard to other Dominions. And very sensibly too in the improbable event of a break up or a break-down it is the Dominion's own business to find a way out as best it can. It must drée its weird as the Scots say Britain simply cannot expect India any longer to believe that she is afraid to part with power in India's own interests. If chaos must come as a result of self-government, it will come some day and India alone will have to deal with it. That is a prospect which to her is far less grim than the desperate frustration she feels, confronted with Britain's policy of dealing with her as cavalierly as if she were a conquered country under military occupation. It cannot be good for Britain, either, to inspire in India that feeling of futility

## Congress Must Assert Itself

GANDHIJI'S statement on Mr Amery's speech is charged with such emotion as he rarely puts into his public utterances "Every line and every word of it breathes indignation—indignation of a type somewhat unusual with the Mahatma", said the Rt Hon'ble V S Srinivasa Sastri referring to it in his Ranade Hall speech yesterday. The explanation must be sought in the fact that nothing repels Gandhiji so much as insincerity and Mr Amery in his speech was so obviously concerned with making debating points that he had no use for sincerity. Much as we should have liked to be able to agree with Mr. Sastri's view that "Mr Amery has, upon this occasion, apparently with sincerity, regretted as much as most of us do, that the Congress should have retired, as it were, from the seats of power and chosen to support a campaign of civil disobedience", we are unable to find any warrant for this in Mr Amery's speech. Mr Amery should know, what the man in the street knows, that the resignation of the Congress Ministries had nothing to do with the communal squabbles, and yet he seemed to accept without question the Muslim League's charge that the object of the Congress was to dominate the country, and on the basis of that assumption he ironically commiserated it on its bad mistake in adopting a wrong method to gain that end. As to his 'sincerity' in regretting the resignation of the Congress Ministries, the terms in which he referred to the attitude of the electorate towards the Adviser regimes leave not the slightest room for any such supposition. "The change to direct personal government by the Governors and permanent officials met with general acquiescence and, indeed, goodwill", complacently observed Mr Amery and in doing so was only repeating in public what others in authority in India have been saying freely in private. They have been saying, too, that from their point of view Adviser rule represents an ideal arrangement and it would be foolish to change it, at any rate so long as the war continues. There is, thus, no warrant for the assumption that Britain is willing and anxious to see the Congress back in power in the Provinces.

But that does not mean that the Congress should allow itself to be ignored. It has to consider its duty to the electorate. Mr. Amery, as we pointed out the other day, uttered a gross libel when



he misrepresented the electorate as positively in love with the Adviser Governments. He overlooked the fact that not a single normal and constitutional mode of expressing its resentment is available to the electorate, with the suspension of Legislature and the persistent refusal of the Government to accept the challenge that it should test public opinion by a general election. What with the silencing of the Legislature on the one hand and Gandhiji's decision, on the other to confine all political action on the part of Congressmen to his restricted *satyagraha* normal political activity has fallen into disuse and the public is feeling anything but happy over this. With great feeling Gandhiji writes, "With Mr Amery's state of mind, I suppose it is too much to expect him to have the elementary grace to acknowledge the studied moderation of the Congress in its desire not to embarrass the British Government, while it is fighting for its very existence. Not having the grace he turns the Congress moderation against it and claims that the Congress civil disobedience has fallen flat." The simple truth is that the British Government as it is constituted today understands only *real-politik* and is obviously basking in the comfortable conviction that the Congress has reduced itself to a cypher and may therefore be disregarded as of no account. And we must say with all respect, as we have said before that Britain will not be forced to sit up and take notice so long as the Congress maintains the attitude which Gandhiji says he authoritatively interpreted, after the revocation of the Poona offer by declaring that "the British Government could not at the present moment grant or declare India's independence and that therefore, for the time we should be satisfied with complete freedom of speech and pen." India must not whether on the plea of not wishing to embarrass Britain or on any other consideration default in her duty to herself—to press with all the strength at her command for the immediate transference to herself of the reality of power war or no war. It is in order that the Congress may regain the initiative in this matter that we have been urging that the *satyagraha* movement should be called off as it has sidetracked the main political issue. For the same reason, it is difficult to accept the proposition that if Mr Amery's No to the Bombay Conference demands should be final we should, while regretting it, acquiesce in it and concentrate on restoring the Congress to power in the Provinces. The very developments which seem likely owing to the turn the war is taking, <sup>215</sup>

their probable reactions on our domestic problems emphasise the paramount need for the people's leaders securing a decisive voice in the Central Government. As all power and all authority is to-day concentrated in that Government, so long as that Government remains irresponsible and autocratic, popular Governments in the Provinces would not by themselves be able to do much, either by way of safeguarding popular liberties and India's interests or of ensuring peace, order and good government within the country.

It is the right and the duty of the Congress to organise a country-wide campaign to force Britain to adopt a more reasonable attitude towards the National Demand. In this connection, it is not without significance that Gandhiji, while holding as firmly to non-violence as ever, should declare that "if India had been equipped and trained for self-defence and if India had been a voluntary ally of Great Britain, I hold that all European powers combined for destruction would not have touched Great Britain", and should further emphasise that "the first act of any Government worth the name would be to teach its people the art of self-defence, but the foreign British Government had no concern about this fundamental welfare of India's citizens and so it deprived the people of the use of arms". From this it follows that only a popular Government at the Centre can be expected to rectify this grave defect, and it becomes our duty to work for the establishment of such a Government without delay. Let Britain too ponder well what Gandhiji says about the immense gain that India's voluntary and wholehearted co-operation will be to her in this critical hour. By their failure to realise this, Mr Amery and his colleagues are doing as great a disservice to their own people as to India. *The Manchester Guardian* pertinently observes, "We do not have India behind us as we ought to have, and only by the Government trying again and again risking failure, never despairing, always seeking control of the events never drifting, shall we succeed". On whether Britain does in time succeed in pacifying and reconciling India depends nothing less than her own future and that of her Empire.

## Bombay Conference Replies

THE Standing Committee of the Bombay Conference has given a dignified and befitting reply to Mr Amery's patronising advice. It reminds him that the Conference realised the need for promoting an understanding between the Congress and the Muslim League, long before the Secretary of State invited its attention to this matter. But the Conference, unlike Mr Amery, realised also that action on the lines it advocated was so urgent that it should not be made dependent on the emergence of agreement between Indian parties—agreement which Mr Amery himself had done all he could to make difficult, if not impossible. For the same reason the Committee points out, his gratuitous advice to the Conference to form a Centre Party must be rejected. It roundly tells Mr Amery that his advice is vitiated by the fact that his *bona fides* are not beyond question. He asks Indian parties to agree among themselves forgetting that when on former occasions India presented united demands they were contemptuously brushed aside, and there is no reason to suppose that the same thing will not happen again even if a Centre Party an idea for which Mr Amery has suddenly developed an affection, should emerge in time and succeed in formulating an agreed demand. What is even more conclusive Mr Amery knows all the time that he is asking for the impossible by making it clear that by agreement he means neither more nor less than that Mr Jinnah must be placated and his consent obtained. "The burden of the Secretary of state's speech says the Committee "is that before he can be prepared to consider any proposal, there must be the prior approval of Mr Jinnah—a position which no self respecting political party can accept or tolerate." In uttering this forthright indictment the Bombay Conference completely vindicates the Congress stand in this respect.

The Committee has little difficulty in demolishing the specious pleas by which Mr Amery sought to defend his refusal to accept the concrete proposals formulated at Bombay for an interim settlement. It points out that there was nothing revolutionary about its plan for the reorganisation of the Central government as the Viceroy's August offer had contemplated a large majority of non-official members in the Viceroy's Council and all that the Bombay Conference asked was that the Council should be made up wholly of non-officials.

That, nevertheless, Mr Amery should regard this as an attempt to supersede the present form of Government by an entirely different one inevitably leads to the conclusion that what the Secretary really objects to is the transfer of important portfolios like Finance and Defence. Why then pretend, says the Committee, that the failure to reach an agreement among Indians themselves is the obstacle to political advance, since it is quite clear that "even if there had been a previous agreement between the main political parties these portfolios would not have been entrusted to Indian members"? The Committee's conclusion is only too well supported by Mr Amery's pointed remark in his speech that at no time could Britain forget or relinquish her 'historic obligations'. No wonder that, having not the slightest intention to part with the reality of power, Mr Amery should put forward flimsy and irrelevant excuses for rejecting the Bombay scheme on the ground that such a Centre as it proposed would not have legislative backing, that he should reject as a tall order the very modest demand that India should be dealt with as a Dominion in regard to international and inter-imperial matters, forgetting that she is an original member of the League of Nations and has been told times without number that that was an external and visible symbol of her Dominion Status, or, above all, that he should persistently evade the demand for a time-limit for the conferment of full self-government.

The Committee does not use the language of exaggeration in pointing out that "the present policy of the Secretary of State is bound to have a deleterious effect on the minds of the people and on the situation in India for which the entire responsibility must be his and of His Majesty's Government". And so far as they are concerned, the leaders who organised the Bombay Conference do not propose, it will be noticed with satisfaction, to acquiesce in Mr Amery's 'No', but, on the contrary, are resolved to organise public opinion in the country in support of the demand that power should be transferred forthwith to the representatives of the people. They are not oblivious to the dangers implicit in the recent war development, but unlike those who facetiously plead that this is not the time to stop and argue with Britain however unreasonable she may be, they pertinently point out that, while they are all-giving every possible help to Britain in this grave crisis, "they feel that such help will not come in abundance unless, at this critical juncture, the present policy of drift is

abandoned and Indians are placed in positions of real power and responsibility" The British Government's refusal to do what is dictated alike by considerations of justice and of self interest should be exposed and the Bombay leaders will have the support of all progressive opinion in the country in undertaking this necessary task.

—*The Hindu*, April 29, 1941

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## Hammered But Unchastened

IT is to be hoped that those good people who met in Bombay a few weeks ago and passed resolutions suggesting ways and means to end the political deadlock in India, now realise the kind of men they have to deal with in the Secretary of State for India and his colleagues in the British Cabinet

Mr Amery now tells them that the very modest and moderate proposals put forward for the Indianisation of the present Executive Council are unacceptable to the Government, since a great war is being carried on

It is Mr Amery, himself, who needs to be reminded that Britain is waging a war—a war for freedom and democracy

They have now been asked to bring about unity in the country particularly between the Congress and Muslim League, and then approach the British Government with their considered proposals. When Mr Jinnah is fully persuaded to co-operate with the Congress, we imagine, Mr Amery will proceed to find further obstacles in the way of giving to Indians what they persistently demand

We fortunately have had no delusions in the matter. We only regret that there are still some Indians who believe in the “bona fides” of either Whitehall or New Delhi and expect them to treat the country’s demands justly and equitably.

Mahatma Gandhi, at any rate, stands fully justified in declining to withdraw his movement, though Mr Amery ridiculed it as a huge joke, since only 7,000 Indian leaders have been jailed and only 5,000 are now in prison, some of them Premiers, Speakers and Ministers who were responsible for administration in eight Provinces!

Mr Amery now deludes himself into the belief that everything in India is being carried on in the best way possible. Indian soldiers are fighting loyally at the front, India is producing large quantities of munitions and so on. What else do the men who rule at Whitehall require?

As usual, Mr Amery gave more words of encouragement to Mr Jinnah to carry on the work he has undertaken in his latest

*avatar* If the present democracy is not agreeable to the League it could have something else to suit its leader

It is really very touching to find that there is so much in common between a Tory Imperialist and a Muslim Leaguer who claims to be fighting for his country's independence. Both are to be congratulated on their new-born admiration and friendship for each other

From beginning to end, Mr Amery's speech was a depressing recital of the difficulties particularly communal, which prevent honest British politicians like himself from fulfilling their oft repeated promises to India. He ended with an appeal to all and sundry to close their ranks, reach an agreement and then approach him with a begging bowl in their hands for any crumbs that he might be disposed to throw them.

In view of this, the strenuous efforts of some Indian journals, in conjunction with the gentlemen who met in Bombay to resolve the political deadlock seem to be utterly futile, however well-intentioned

The supreme fact is that the British Government does not intend to part with power and all the fine phrases and hypocritical sentiments in Mr Amery's tedious speech are merely insincere propaganda for the benefit of perhaps, Americans and other neutrals.

Mr Amery's conceit and self-satisfaction are impregnable. He made two speeches and congratulated himself on the good reception given to his initial effort after it had been devastated by an unparalleled spate of criticism from all sides of the House

It is to be hoped that even those Indian optimists who were trying to persuade the Mahatma to give up his methods will now be convinced that he is justified in his persistence whatever the Diehards in Whitehall may think or do

Some members felt themselves greatly concerned and expressed the hope that by agreeing to appease the Moderates who met in Bombay it was possible to utilise not only the material resources of India in the cause of war but also the goodwill and moral support of the country

But we do not suppose Mr Amery is much concerned with such moral considerations. He almost thought it was high treason to think

of changing over the Government of India at this stage, though even Sir George Schuster could not agree with him there.

The Secretary of State for India was even deaf to the appeal of men like Sir Stanley Reed and others that the Moderates should be persuaded to take up office, so that the world could be deluded by the sham façade of an Indian National Government fully co-operating with the Viceroy and Mr Amery.

The suggestion was made by Sir George Schuster that it might be possible to appoint an Indian Under-Secretary of State who "would send back trusted words to India which would tell what the British people are fighting for and banish for ever this ridiculous idea that this is only another war for Imperialistic purposes" It was not accepted.

We are afraid the mere appointment of an Indian as Mr Amery's assistant will serve no useful purpose, as was the case in Lord Sinha's time.

It is futile moreover to hope to rally the Moderates to the standard of the Government to carry on the Government, either now or afterwards, for they have no sanctions, behind them.

The whole of Mr Amery's speech was full of mis-statements and misrepresentations calculated to mislead the British public and neutral countries, as well as to encourage communal fanatics never to come to an agreement with the Congress.

Mr Amery perhaps realises that once communal agreement is reached, the whole superstructure so painfully raised by him and his friends in India will fall to the ground.

Finally, we cannot pass unchallenged the audacious statement about India's alleged prosperity. Mr Amery knows that it is not a fact as every foreigner who has come to this country has amply testified. The only people who are prosperous in India are the great Services, the alien merchants, and a small upper crust of Indian business men. The masses have to exist on an average income of between 50 and 60 rupees per year.

It is to make a clean sweep of such monstrous conditions that Indians are demanding independence.

—*The Bombay Sentinel*, April 24, 1941



## Divide and Rule

IT is to be hoped that the British Government, particularly the Premier and Mr Amery are now convinced that their policy has no friends in India and that even the Liberals whom they are urging to rally round their tattered flag of reaction and obscurantism refuse to accept the invitation.

The reason for this is simple. When Mr Amery refused to have anything whatever to do with the very modest proposals of the Bombay Conference—for which so much support was canvassed beforehand by well-meaning people, whose leaders are undoubted friends of the British Government and who are anxious to preserve India's connection with Britain for ever—it may be taken for granted that he has now burnt all his boats and is drifting aimlessly on the uncharted seas of reaction and repression.

After this it may be as difficult to convince the world as to convince Indians that Britain is really fighting for democracy and freedom and not for her Empire, for there is not a word of encouragement in the whole of Mr Amery's speech calculated to dissipate that view.

Mahatma Gandhi has often enough said that he would much prefer anarchy with which British politicians so often threaten politically minded Indians, to the present exploitation of India's resources and her people by British imperialists.

It is this sense of frustration which is mainly responsible for the slogan of Indian independence, and it is apparent that Mr Amery and the British Parliament are out to drive Indians ultimately to the frame of mind of Mr De Valera and the people of Eire.

Mr Amery was so much obsessed with differences that he could see nothing else. He harped on them tirelessly with a view to confound British critics abroad. He seems to labour under the impression that the majority of Indians are fond of fishing in the troubled

waters of politics and communalism, out of mere spite, and that they have nothing else to do

He dishonestly referred to "those whose whole career has been in political agitation and trouble and to whom political interest still seems the dominant one"

This charge on the face of it is preposterous and grotesque and calculated to give a wrong impression to the whole world. If Indians have been faced with a great political problem for the last hundred years it is not their fault, but that of British politicians.

Indians have realised that unless India becomes free from foreign domination and exploitation, it is impossible for her to rise to her full status and take her rightful place in the comity of independent nations.

At present India is merely a follower of Britain, tied to the chariot wheels of British Imperialism. That is a very humiliating position for any people with self-respect.

Men like Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru abominate politics, but they have been forced into their present attitude by the Indian bureaucracy and they have no choice in the matter. Mr Amery's charge is preposterous, dishonest and inexcusable. Only a blind Tory die-hard is capable of adding such insult to injury.

Most unfortunately, the debate in the Commons is calculated to damp the enthusiasm of Indians, particularly of the intelligentsia, for the cause of Britain, for the sense of frustration has been almost overwhelming.

Even the Liberals, as the Chairman of their Federation says, find there is nothing new in Mr Amery's statement, and that to him the material help of India is more precious than all the moral and spiritual support of the people for Britain's cause.

There is nothing strange in that, since we have been assured by men like Mr A. G. Gardiner that Mr Amery's is the mentality of a "barbarian."

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote some time ago that India had now come to the parting of ways, though he was an inveterate lover of

England and English institutions. If such a thing happens, the credit for it is due to the Viceroy and Mr Amery both Tories of the most reactionary type.

One might have believed in Mr Amery's "bona fides" if he had simultaneously asked the Muslim League to come to terms with other Indians. But he does not do that. He is more concerned to encourage the League to carry on its war against all those who ask for democracy in India.

Even the Liberals are not in a mood to support the formation of a Central Party as long as nothing is done to encourage faith in British promises. What they call "faith in British statesmanship" is wholly absent in India and nothing has been done to restore it.

In this connection it would be very pertinent to quote the words of the Muslim ex-Premier of the North Western Frontier Province, which is to be forced into Muslim League's Pakistan. Dr Khan Sahib stated that the Frontier Pathans would prefer death to Pakistan, for their difference with the Muslim League were of a "vital character".

For my part" said Dr Khan Sahib, "I would prefer death rather than join a futile set of people, utterly devoid of action but loud on the stage. What a Pathan wants is action, sacrifice and selfless service to the cause of the country. Where are these to be found in the Muslim League?"

And yet these are the friends of British Imperialism, which is deliberately misrepresenting the cause of Indians and withholding a modicum of democracy from them on the specious plea that they are not united while everything is being done to encourage a separatist scheme.

There is no sense in blaming the Muslim League or other dupes of Mr Amery who is merely carrying on the traditional policy of all imperialist countries by dividing Indians to rule over them.

—*The Bombay Sentinel*, April 23, 1941

## Who Are Responsible Now

**M**AHATMA GANDHI has made a very scathing criticism of Mr Amery's ill-timed, wholly wrong and "amazingly misleading" statement in the Commons about the Indian demand. Gandhiji is fully supported by other Indian leaders of all sides, who have given expression to their amazement in equally strong terms.

It is significant that Mr Amery's baseless charges have not been supported by a single Indian leader of reputation. Some of the Liberal journals in England have condemned them in unmeasured terms.

One must agree with the Mahatma when he urges that "distress" instead of softening Mr Amery has left him "absolutely cold and untouched." He is not concerned with realities. He lives in a world of his own thoroughly discredited and reactionary, but very characteristic of men of his type.

Mr Amery's statement is particularly misconceived at a time like the present, when there are communal riots in several important cities in India, in which hundreds of men and women have lost their lives and very valuable property has been wantonly destroyed.

That is not an achievement of which the rulers of India can be proud. They cannot absolve themselves from responsibility.

Gandhiji naturally feels for the unfortunate and tragic plight of thousands of innocent citizens who had to flee from cities and towns to save themselves. This is mainly due to their inability to defend themselves. Peaceful and innocent citizens are without means of defence, and in many cases the Police are merely interested spectators.

The U P Government some time ago prohibited students in schools and colleges from drilling with lathis or dummy rifles, for fear

that they might become experts in their use. This has been done while the German armies are marching to Suez, to the Middle East and the Government is complaining that it is not getting enough young Indians to serve in the Army.

In Britain even boys are being trained to serve their country and handle rifles or guns. But in India the Government will not even trust youths with lathis and dummy rifles.

Who can deny after this that the people are being deliberately emasculated as Gandhiji writes in such strong but justifiable terms?

It is curious that while Mr Amery has been praising the worth and work of Indian soldiers in Africa Mr Churchill has not the grace to mention them in his broadcast where he merely glorifies the achievements of the white citizens of the British Empire, though the coloured races dominate in it numerically.

Mahatma Gandhiji is right when he says that all the communal trouble in this country which has been intensified after the introduction of dyarchy and the present constitution, is due to the "proud and ill conceived motto of Britain to "divide and rule"

"It is the British statesmen who are responsible for the divisions in India's ranks, writes Gandhiji "and the divisions will continue so long as the British sword holds India under bondage."

Indians might have said nothing if Mr Amery had merely given expression to his views about the future Government of India and refused any political advance. But he has been guilty of dishonest statements, "made in utter disregard of truth," misleading the ignorant world.

But it is useless to exaggerate the importance of the views of Mr Amery though he happens to be the Secretary of State for India at the present moment. Whoever may occupy that position, we do not believe British policy is likely to change towards this country.

Mr Srinivasa Sastri made an eloquent appeal to the Congress leaders to come out of the cells and take up responsibility in the Provinces and protect other elements in India.

Mr Sastri is not now a Congressman, but its unsparing and chronic critic or he might appreciate the insuperable difficulty in the way of Congressmen returning to office even to protect the public, as Mr Sastri pleads.

No doubt the very tragic incidents in Bengal and Ahmedabad have touched the hearts of most Indians, though communalists are left cold by them

Mr Sastri believes that it will be very easy for the Congress to take up office, for the Government will be only too glad to welcome it. Whatever may be the attitude of the Viceroy, or Mr. Amery, it would be fatal for the Congress to resile from its present position and return to office.

So long as the authorities persist in their wrong policy, so long as there is no real "change of heart" anywhere, so long as men in authority, like Mr Amery, continue to make false and unjustified charges against the Congress, so long as its demands are not conceded, so long as one community is encouraged at the expense of communal harmony in India, so long we imagine will it be impossible for the Congress to return to office. The time for such a momentous step is not yet.

If there are others who are anxious to manoeuvre themselves into office, and there are plenty of political adventurers in the country, let them do so. The Congress has left them a free field for their ambitions. But these placemen have been assiduously working in most Congress Provinces, and they have failed signally in their attempts, because though the Congress has left the field it really holds the field.

Mr Sastri's sincerity and eloquence and appeal for moderation are likely to be lost on India's rulers. They are in no mood for concessions or even gestures and are perfectly satisfied with things as they are.

That is exactly what Mr Amery told the Commons, and it may be why Mr Churchill refrained from making the remotest reference to India's magnificent contribution in this war, and her many sacrifices

It has been the complaint of many communalists, who are being duly backed by the authorities that most of the troubles in the country are the result of Congress rule. Now that the Congress is out of office and power it is for them to bring a new heaven on earth to this country. Will they or can they do it?

—*The Bombay Sentinel*, April 29, 1947

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